REV. JOHN G. HENRY,
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

John G. Henry

SPURGEON'S SERMONS.

SECOND SERIES

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SERMONS

OF

REV. C. H. SPURGEON

Of London

REV. JOHN G. HENRY.
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

SECOND SERIES

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PREFACE.

EBENEZER! Hitherto the Lord hath helped me. Truly may the writer say this. In fact he is compelled, before he proceeds to write a few words of preface, to express his hearty thanks that he is able to write at all. Great and sore troubles have rolled over his head; he has been exceedingly cast down. His mournful song was, for a time,

"Turn, turn thee to my soul,
Bring thy salvation near;
When will thy hand release my feet
Out of the deadly snare?

"The tumult of my thoughts
Doth but enlarge my woe:
My spirit languishes, my heart
Is desolate and low."

But now, by merciful restoration, he can again sing of the loving-kindness of the Lord, and make known his faithfulness unto all generations. Renewed health and vigor demand new exertion and fresh gratitude. May divine grace constrain us to the one, and divine love impel us to the other.

Reader, it is no egotism on our part when we say, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

It is a source of great thankfulness that the Lord has spared us to see another year, and has allowed us to complete a second volume. To his upholding grace be glory world without end. How shall the lips of unworthy men be able to show forth the wondrous grace of the Lord Jesus in preserving his people from year to year, and especially when they are exposed to perils from friends and foes, from without and within, from success and from sadness? To him be all glory given, that his servants are kept in his right hand, and are not given over to the will of their enemies. Let feeble saints take courage. He who has helped us hitherto, will not desert us in our future times of need.

The same doctrines which we taught last year are repeated in these sermons. We have met with nothing which has shaken our faith in the "good old paths," but with many things which have constrained us to cleave unto the Word of the Lord with fixed heart and determined spirit. Would that the time were come, when the pure truth of the Gospel would be more fully received among us. Our ministry is a testimony that no new theology is needed to stir the masses and save souls; we defy all the negative theologians in England to give such proof of their ministry as we can. If we must be fools in glorying, we do; we must boast that the old doctrines are victorious, and that the Lord the Spirit has most signally honored them. We do not cite the overwhelming and ever-increasing multitudes who listen to us as a proof in this matter, but we do and will glory in the power of the Gospel, in that it has brought so many to the arms of Christ, and raised so many from the dunghill. In every place where the old Gospel has been proclaimed, it has had its trophies from the worst of men, and we are no ex-

ception to the rule. The slain of the Lord have been many. His arrows have found out the hearts of his enemies; many have been overthrown by his Spirit, and have been ultimately brought to find life and healing in the blood of Jesus. The best evidences of the truth of our holy religion are to be found in the marvellous effects it produces. Drunkards, harlots, swearers, thieves, liars, and such like, when reclaimed and regenerated, are the jewels in the crown of the truth; of such we must say in confidence, "What hath God wrought?" If these truths were only found united with a learned and eloquent ministry, they would be imputed to *the man*, and not to *the truth*, but in this case our enemies themselves are willing witnesses that they can not be so accounted for. God hath put his treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be ascribed wholly to himself. We would confess the truth of all that is uttered to our disparagement, for therein we do but magnify the grace of God, who worketh by the least of instruments the greatest acts of his love. O for the days of pure doctrine, preached with emphasis of earnestness, and demonstration of the Spirit; for these we look and wait. May the Lord send them in his own time.

The sermons of last year have enjoyed a very wide circulation in America. A volume having been reprinted in the United States, it has reached the number of 15,000 in a short time. With the divine blessing how much may be accomplished, but without it how terrible the waste of effort and opportunity.

And now, reader, if thou art a renewed soul, may our covenant God feed thee, keep thee, and perfect thee; and may the words of thy brother in Christ be the means of some little comfort and edification to thee. It is the same Lord who hath loved us both, and we hope that he will unite us all in in the unity of the Spirit and in the bonds of love.

But if thou art ungodly, look at the last words of the volume, and consider them, and may Jesus the Saviour give thee grace to turn to him and be saved.

This is the fervent prayer of thine to serve in the Gospel,

C. H. Spurgeon

London, January, 1857.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

PAGE

THE GLORIOUS HABITATION 1

SERMON II.

HEALING FOR THE WOUNDED: A SERMON FOR THE CRIMEAN SOLDIERS. . 18

SERMON III.

THE PECULIAR SLEEP OF THE BELOVED 34

SERMON IV.

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF 50

SERMON V.

ELECTION 68

SERMON VI

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING AND THE HOUSE OF FEASTING 84

SERMON VII.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT 104

SERMON VIII.

PAGE
THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR..... 120

SERMON IX.

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST..... 136

SERMON X.

THE SAINT'S HERITAGE AND WATCHWORD..... 152

SERMON XI.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT..... 167

SERMON XII.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE..... 188

SERMON XIII.

A VIEW OF GOD'S GLORY..... 204

SERMON XIV.

CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST..... 217

SERMON XV.

HARVEST TIME..... 232

SERMON XVI.

PAGE
Sweet Comfort for Feeble Saints 246

SERMON XVII.

The Resurrection of the Dead..... 262

SERMON XVIII.

The Curse Removed..... 280

SERMON XIX.

The Comer's Conflict with Satan..... 296

SERMON XX.

Christ the Rock..... 312

SERMON XXI.

A Visit to Calvary..... 328

SERMON XXII.

Teaching Children..... 345

SERMON XXIII.

The God of the Aged..... 361

SERMON XXIV.

PAGE
OMNISCIENCE..... 380

SERMON XXV.

CHRIST IN THE COVENANT..... 395

SERMON XXVI.

LOVE'S COMMENDATION..... 410

SERMON XXVII.

RUTH..... 426

SERMON I.

THE GLORIOUS HABITATION.

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."—PSALM xc. 1

MOSES was the inspired author of three devotional compositions. We first of all find him as Moses the poet, singing the song which is aptly joined with that of Jesus, in the Revelation, where it says, "The song of Moses and of the Lamb." He was a poet on the occasion when Pharaoh and his hosts were cast into the Red Sea, "his chosen captains also were drowned in the Red Sea." Further on in his life we discover him in the character of a preacher; and then his doctrine distilled as the dew, and his speech dropped like the rain, in those chapters which are full of glorious imagery, and rich with poetry, which you will find in the book of Deuteronomy. And now in the Psalms, we find him the author of a prayer: "A prayer of Moses, the man of God." Happy combination of the poet, the preacher, and the man of prayer! Where three such things are found together, the man becomes a very giant above his fellows. It often happens that the man who preaches has but little poetry; and the man who is the poet would not be able to preach and utter his poems before immense assemblies, but would be only fit to write them by himself. It is a rare combination when true devotion and the spirit of poetry and eloquence meet in the same man. You will see in this Psalm a wondrous depth of spirituality; you will mark how the poet subsides into the man of God; and how, lost in himself, he sings his own frailty, declares the glory of God, and asks that he may have the blessing of his heavenly Father always resting on his head.

This first verse will derive peculiar interest if you remember

the place where Moses was when he thus prayed. He was in the wilderness; not in some of the halls of Pharaoh, nor yet in a habitation in the land of Goshen; but in a wilderness. And perhaps from the summit of the hill, looking upon the tribes of Israel as they were taking up their tents and marching along, he thought, "Ah! poor travelers. They seldom rest anywhere; they have not any settled habitation where they can dwell. Here they have no continuing city;" but he lifted his eyes above, and he said, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." Passing his eye back through history, he saw one great temple where God's people had dwelt; and with his prophetical eye rolling with sacred frenzy, he could see that throughout all futurity the specially chosen of God would be able to sing, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

Taking this verse as the subject of our discourse this morning, we shall, first of all, *explain it;* and then we shall try and do what the old Puritans called "*improve*" it; by which they did not mean improve the text, but improve the people a little by the consideration of the verse.

1. First, we will try to explain it somewhat. Here is *a habitation:* "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place;" and, secondly, if I may use such a common word, here is *the lease of it:* "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

First, then, here is *a habitation:* "Lord, thou hast been our habitation." The mighty Jehovah, who filleth all immensity, the Eternal, Everlasting, Great I Am, does not refuse to allow figures concerning himself. Though he is so high that the eye of angel hath not seen him, though he is so lofty that the wing of cherub hath not reached him, though he is so great that the utmost extent of the travels of immortal spirits have never discovered the limit of himself—yet he does not object that his people should speak of him thus familiarly, and should say, "Jehovah, thou hast been our dwelling-place." We shall understand this figure better by contrasting the thought, with the state of Israel in the wilderness; and, secondly, by making mention of some things by way of comparison, which are peculiar to our house, and which we never can enjoy if we are not the possessors of a dwelling-place of our own.

First, we shall contrast this thought, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place," with the peculiar position of the Israelites as they were traveling through the wilderness.

We remark, first, that *they must have been in a state of great uneasiness.* At nightfall, or when the pillar stayed its motion, the tents were pitched, and they laid themselves down to rest. Perhaps to-morrow, ere the morning sun had risen, the trumpet sounded, they stirred themselves from their beds and found the ark was in motion, and the fiery cloudy pillar was leading the way through the narrow defiles of the mountain up the hillside, or along the arid waste of the wilderness. They had scarcely time to arrange their little property in their tents and make all things comfortable for themselves, before they heard the sound of "Away! away! away! this is not your rest; you must still be onward journeying toward Canaan!" They could not plant a little patch of ground around their tents, they could not lay out their house in order, and arrange their furniture, they could not become attached to the spot of ground. Even though just now their father had been buried in a place where a tent had tarried for a time, yet they must be off. They must have no attachment to the place, they must have nothing of what we call comfort, ease, and peace; but be always journeying, always traveling. Moreover, so exposed were they, that they never could be very easy in their tents. At one time the sand, with the hot simoom behind it, would drive through the tent and cover them almost to burial. On frequent occasions the hot sun would scorch them, and their canvas would scarce be a preservation; at another time the biting north wind would freeze around them, so that within their tents they sat shivering and cowering around their fires. They had little ease; but behold the contrast which Moses, the man of God, discerns with gratitude, "Thou art not our tent, but thou art our dwelling-place. Though we are uneasy here, though we are tossed from side to side by troubles, though we travel through a wilderness, and find it a rough pathway, though when we sit down here we know not what comfort means, O Lord, in thee we possess all the comforts which a house can afford, we have all that a mansion or palace can give the prince, who can loll

upon his couch, and rest upon his bed of down. Lord, thou art to us comfort, thou art a house and habitation." Have you ever known what it is to have God for your dwelling-place in the sense of comfort? Do you know what it is, when you have storms behind you, to feel like a sea-bird, blown to the land by the very storm? Do you know what it is, when you have been caged sometimes by adversity, to have the string cut by divine grace, and like the pigeon that flies at once to its own dovecot, have you sped your way across the ether, and found yourself in God? Do you know what it is, when you are tossed on the waves, to go down into the depths of Godhead, there rejoicing that not a wave of trouble ruffles your spirit, but that you are serenely at home with God your own Almighty Father? Can you, amid all the uneasiness of this desert journey, find a comfort there? Is the breast of Jesus a sweet pillow for your head? Can you, lie thus on the breast of Deity? Can you put yourself in the stream of Providence and float along without a struggle, while angels sing around you—divinely guided, divinely led—"We are bearing thee along the stream of Providence to the ocean of eternal bliss!" Do you know what it is to lie on God, to give up all care, to drive anxiety away, and there—not in a recklessness of spirit, but in a holy carelessness—to be careful for nothing, "but in every thing by supplication to make known your wants unto God?" If so, you have gained the first idea: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place throughout all generations."

Again, the Israelites were *very much exposed to all kinds of noxious creatures*, owing to their residing in tents, and their habits of wandering. At one time the fiery serpent was their foe. By night the wild beasts prowled around them. Unless that fiery pillar had been a wall of fire around them and a glory in the midst, they might all have fallen a prey to the wild monsters that roamed the deserts. Worse foes they found in human kind.

The Amalekites rushed down from the mountains; wild wandering hordes constantly attacked them. They never felt themselves secure, for they were travelers through an enemy's country. They were hasting across a land where they were

not wanted, to another land that was providing means to oppose them when they should arrive. Such is the Christian. He is journeying through an enemy's land; every day he is exposed to danger. His tent may be broken down by death; the slanderer is behind him, the open foeman is before him; the wild beast that prowls by night, and the pestilence that wasteth by day, continually seek his destruction; he finds no rest where he is; he feels himself exposed. But, says Moses, "Though we live in a tent exposed to wild beasts and fierce men, yet thou art our habitation. In thee we find no exposure. Within thee we find ourselves secure, and in thy glorious person we dwell as in an impregnable tower of defense, safe from every fear and alarm, knowing that we are secure." O Christian, hast thou ever known what it is to stand in the midst of battles, with arrows flying thick around thee more than thy shield can catch: and yet thou hast been as secure as if thou wert folding thine arms and resting within the walls of some strong bastion, where arrow could not reach thee, and where even the sound of trumpet could not disturb thine ears? Hast thou known what it is to dwell securely in God, to enter into the Most High, and laugh to scorn the anger, the frowns, the sneers, the contempt, the slander and calumny of men; to ascend into the sacred place of the pavilion of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and to feel thyself secure? And mark thee, thou mayest do this. In times of pestilence it is possible to walk in the midst of cholera and death, singing—

> "Plagues and deaths around me fly,
> Till he please, I can not die."

It is possible to stand exposed to the utmost degree of danger, and yet to feel such a holy serenity that we can laugh at fear; too great, too mighty, too powerful through God to stoop for one moment to the cowardice of trembling, "we know whom we have believed, and we are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him." When houseless men wander, when poor distressed spirits, beaten by the storm, find no refuge, we enter into God, and shutting behind us the door of faith, we say, "Howl, ye winds blow, ye tempests; roar, ye wild beasts; come on, ye robbers!"

"He that hath made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode,
Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
And there at night shall rest his head."

Lord, in this sense, thou hast been our habitation.

Again, poor Israel, in the wilderness, *were continually exposed to change.* They were never in one place long. Sometimes they might tarry for a month in one spot—just near the seventy palm-trees. What a sweet and pleasant place to go out each morning, to sit beside the well and drink that clear stream! "Onward!" cries Moses; and he takes them to a place where the bare rocks stand out from the mountain side, and the red burning sand is beneath their feet; vipers spring up around them, and thorny brakes grow instead of pleasing vegetation. What a change have they! Yet, another day they shall come to a place that shall be more dreary still. They walk through a defile so close and narrow, that the affrighted rays of the sun dare scarce enter such a prison, lest they should never find their way out again! They must go onward from place to place, continually changing, never having time to settle, and to say, "Now we are secure, in this place we shall dwell." Here, again, the contrast casts light upon the text: "Ah!" says Moses, "though we are always changing, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place throughout all generations." The Christian knows no change with regard to God. He may be rich to-day and poor to-morrow; he may be sickly to-day and well to-morrow; he may be in happiness to-day, to-morrow he may be distressed; but there is no change with regard to his relationship to God. If he loved me yesterday he loves me to-day. I am neither better nor worse in God than I ever was. Let prospects be blighted, let hopes be blasted, let joy be withered, let mildews destroy every thing, I have lost nothing of what I have in God. He is my strong habitation whereunto I can continually resort. The Christian never becomes poorer, and never grows richer with regard to God. "Here," he can say, "is a thing that never can pass away or change. On the brow of the Eternal there is never a furrow; his hair is unwhitened by age; his arm is unpalsied by weakness; his heart does not

change in its affections; his will does not vary in its purpose; he is the immutable Jehovah, standing fast and forever. Thou art our habitation! As the house changes not, but stands in the same place, so have I found thee from my youth up. When first I was cast upon thee from my mother's breast, I found thee my God of Providence. When first I knew thee by that spiritual knowledge which thou alone canst give, I found thee a sure habitation; and I find thee such now. Yea, when I shall be old and gray-headed, I know thou wilt not forsake me; thou wilt be the same dwelling-place in all generations."

One thought more in contrasting the position of the Israelites with ourselves—that is, *weariness*. How weary must Israel have been in the wilderness! How tired must have been the soles of their feet with their constant journeyings! They were not in a place of repose, luxury, and rest, but in a land of journeying, and weariness, and trouble. I think I see them traveling, wiping frequently the burning sweat from their brows, and saying, "O that we had a habitation where we might rest! O that we could enter a land of vines and pomegranates, a city where we might enjoy immunity from alarm! God has promised it to us, but we have not found it. There remaineth a rest for the people of God: O that we might find it." Christian! God is your habitation in this sense. He is your rest; and you will never find rest except in him. I defy a man who has no God to have a soul at rest. He who has not Jesus for his Saviour, will always be a restless spirit. Read some of Byron's verses, and you will find him—if he was truly picturing himself—to be the very personification of that spirit who "walked to and fro seeking rest and finding none." Here is one of his verses:—

"I fly like a bird of the air,
In search of a home and a rest;
A balm for the sickness of care,
A bliss for a bosom unblest."

Read the lives of any men who have had no gospel justification, or have had no knowledge of God, and you will find that they were like the poor bird that had its nest pulled down, and

knew not where to rest, flying about, wandering, and seeking a habitation. Some of you have tried to find rest out of God. You have sought to find it in your wealth; but you have pricked your head when you have laid it on that pillow. You have sought it in a friend, but that friend's arm has been a broken reed, where you hoped it would be a wall of strength. You will never find rest except in God; there is no refuge but in him. Oh! what rest and composure are there in him! It is more than sleep, more than calm, more than quiet; deeper than the dead stillness of the noiseless sea in its utmost depths, where it is undisturbed by the slightest ripple, and winds can never intrude. There is a holy calm and sweet repose which the Christian only knows, something like the slumbering stars up there in beds of azure; or like the seraphic rest which we may suppose beatified spirits have when they before the throne continually bow; there is a rest so deep and calm, so still and quiet, so profound, that we find no words to describe it. You have tried it, and can rejoice in it. You know that the Lord has been your dwelling-place—your sweet, calm, constant home, where you can enjoy peace in all generations. But I have dwelt too long upon this part of the subject, and I will speak of it in a different way.

First of all, *the dwelling-place of man is the place where he can unbend himself, and feel himself at home, and speak familiarly.* In this pulpit I must somewhat check my words; I deal with men of the world who watch my speech, and are ever on the catch, men who wish to have this or that to retail—I must be on my guard. So you men of business, when you are on the exchange, or in your shops, have to guard yourselves. What does the man do at home? He can lay bare his breast, and do and say as he pleases; it is his own house, his dwelling-place; and is he not master there? shall he not do as he will with his own? Assuredly; for he feels himself at home. Ah! my beloved, do you ever find yourself in God to be at home? Have you been with Christ, and told your secrets in his ear, and found that you could do so without reserve? We do not generally tell secrets to other people, for if we do, and make them promise that they will never tell them, they *will* never tell them except to the first person they

meet. Most persons who have secrets told them, are like the lady of whom it is said she never told her secrets except to two sorts of persons—those that asked her and those that did not. You must not trust men of the world; but do you know what it is to tell all your secrets to God in prayer, to whisper all your thoughts to him? You are not ashamed to confess your sins to him with all their aggravations; you make no apologies to God, but you put in every aggravation, you describe all the depths of your baseness. Then, as for your little wants, you would be ashamed to tell them to another; before God you can tell them all. You can tell him your grief that you would not whisper to your dearest friend. With God you can be always at home, you need be under no restraint. The Christian at once gives God the key of his heart, and lets him turn every thing over. He says, "There is the key of every cabinet; it is my desire that thou wouldst open them all. If there are jewels, they are thine; and if there be things that should not be there, drive them out. Search me, and try my heart." The more God lives in the Christian, the better the Christian loves him; the oftener God comes to see him, the better he loves his God. And God loves his people all the more when they are familiar with him. Can you say in this sense, "Lord, thou hast been my dwelling-place?"

Then, again, *man's home is the place where his affections are centered.* God deliver us from those men who do not love their homes! Lives there a man so base, so dead, that he has no affection for his own house? If so, surely the spark of Christianity must have died entirely out. It is *natural* that men should love their homes; it is *spiritual* that they should love them better still. In our homes we find those to whom we must and ever shall be most attached. There our best friends and kindred dwell. When we wander, we are as birds that have left their nests and can find no settled home. We wish to go back and to see again that smile, to grasp once more that loving hand, and to find that we are with those to whom the ties of affection have knit us. We wish to feel—and every Christian man will feel—with regard to his own family, that they are the warp and woof of his own nature, that he has become a part and portion of them; and there he

centers his affection. He can not afford to lavish his love everywhere. He centers it in that particular spot, that oasis in this dark desert world. Christian man, is God your habitation in that sense? Have you given your whole soul to God? Do you feel you can bring your whole heart to him, and say, "O, God! I love from my soul; with the most impassioned earnestness I love thee.

> "'The dearest idol I have known—
> Whate'er that idol be—
> Help me to tear it from its throne,
> And worship only thee!'

O God! though I sometimes wander, yet I love thee in my wanderings, and my heart is fixed on thee. What though the creature doth beguile me, I detest that creature; it is to me as the apple of Sodom. Thou art the master of my soul, the emperor of my heart; no vice-regent, but King of kings. My spirit is fixed on thee as the center of my soul.

> "'Thou art the sea of love
> Where all my pleasures roll,
> The circle where my passions move;
> The center of my soul.'

O God! thou hast been our dwelling-place throughout all generations."

My next remark is concerning the *lease of this dwelling-place.* God is the believer's habitation. Sometimes, you know, people get turned out of their houses, or their houses tumble down about their ears. It is never so with ours: God is our dwelling-place throughout all generations. Let us look back in times past, and we shall find that God has been our habitation. Oh, the old house at home! who does not love it—the place of our childhood, the old roof-tree, the old cottage! There is no village in all the world half so good as that particular village where we were born! True, the gates, and stiles, and posts have been altered; but still there is an attachment to those old houses, the old tree in the park, and the old ivy-mantled tower. It is not very picturesque, perhaps, but we love to go to see it. We like to see the haunts of our

boyhood. There is something pleasant in those old stairs where the clock used to stand; and in the room where grandmother was wont to bend her knee, and where we had family prayer. There is no place like that house after all! Well, beloved, God has been the habitation of the Christian in years that are gone by. Christian, your house is indeed a venerable house, and you have long dwelt there. You dwelt there in the person of Christ long before you were brought into this sinful world; and it is to be your dwelling-place throughout all generations. You are never to ask for another house; you will always be contented with that one you have; you will never wish to change your habitation. And if you wished it, you could not; for he is your dwelling-place in all generations. God give you to know what it is to take this house in its long lease, and ever to have God for your dwelling-place!

II. Now I come to improve this text somewhat. First, let us improve it to SELF-EXAMINATION. How may we know whether we be Christians or not, whether the Lord is our dwelling-place, and will be throughout all generations? I shall give you some hints for self-examination, by referring you to several passages which I have looked out in the first epistle of John. It is remarkable that almost the only scriptural writer who speaks of God as a dwelling-place, is that most loving apostle, John, out of whose epistle we have been reading.

He gives us in the 12th verse of the 4th chapter, one means of knowing whether we are living in God: "*If we love one another*, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." And again, further on, he says, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." You may then tell whether you are a tenant of this great spiritual house by the love you have toward others. Have you a love toward the saints? Well, then, you are a saint yourself. The goats will not love the sheep; and if you love the sheep, it is an evidence that you are a sheep yourself. Many of the Lord's weak family never can get any other evidence of their conversion except this—"We know that

we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." And though that is very little evidence, yet it is such a one that the strongest faith often can not get a much better. "If I do not love God, I love his people; if I am not a Christian, I love his house." What! has the devil told thee thou art not the Lord's? Poor Faintheart, dost thou love the Lord's people? "Yes," sayest thou, "I love to see their faces, and to hear their prayers; I could almost kiss the hem of their garments." Is it so? and would you give to them if they were poor? would you visit them if they were sick, and tend them if they needed assistance? "Ah! yes." Then fear not. You who love God's people must love the Master. We know we dwell in God if we love one another.

In the 13th verse is another sign: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because *he hath given us of his Spirit.*" Have we ever had the Spirit of God in us? That is one of the most solemn questions I can ask. Many of you know what it is to be excited by religious feeling who never had the Spirit of God. Many of us have great need to tremble lest we should not have received that Spirit. I have tried myself scores of times, in different ways, to see whether I really am a possessor of the Spirit of God or not. I know that the people of the world scoff at the idea, and say, "It is impossible for any body to have the Spirit of God." Then it is impossible for any body to go to heaven; for we must have the Spirit of God, we must be born again of the Spirit, before we can enter there. What a serious question is this: "Have I had the Spirit of God in me?" True, my soul is at times lifted on high, and I feel I could sing like a seraph. True, sometimes I am melted down by deep devotion, and I could pray in terrible solemnity. But so could hypocrites, perhaps. Have I the Spirit of God? Have you any evidence within you that you have the Spirit? Are you sure that you are not laboring under a delusion and a dream? Have you actually the Spirit of God within you? If so, you dwell in God. That is the second sign.

But the apostle gives another sign in the 15th verse: "Whosoever shall *confess that Jesus is the Son of God*, God

dwelleth in him, and he in God." The confession of our faith in the Saviour is another sign that we live in God. Oh! poor heart, canst thou not come under this sign? Thou mayest have but little boldness, but canst thou not say, "I believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?" If so, thou dwellest in God. Many of you, I know, say—"When I hear a sermon, I feel affected by it. When I am in the house of God I feel like a child of God, but the business, cares, and troubles of life take me off, and then I fear I am not." But you can say, "I do believe in Christ; I know I cast myself on his mercy, and hope to be saved by him." Then do not say you are not a child of God if you have faith.

But there is one more sign whereby we ought to examine ourselves, in the 3d chapter, 24th verse: "*He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him*, and he in him." Obedience to the commandments of God is a blessed sign of a dwelling in God. Some of you have a deal of religious talk, but not much religious walk; a large stock of outside piety, but not much real inward piety, which develops itself in your actions. That is a hint for some of you who know that it is right to be baptized, and are not. You know it is one of the commandments of God, that "he that believeth shall be baptized," and you are neglecting what you know to be your duty. You are dwelling in God, I doubt not, but you lack one evidence of it, namely—obedience to God's commandments. Obey God, and then you will know that you are dwelling in him.

But I have another word by way of improvement, and that is one of CONGRATULATION. You who dwell in God, allow me to congratulate you. Thrice happy men are ye, if ye are dwelling in God! You need not blush to compare yourselves with angels, you need not think that any on earth can share such happiness as yours! Zion, O how blessed art thou, freed from all sins! Now thou art, through Christ, made to dwell in God, and therefore art eternally secure! I congratulate you, Christians, first, that you have such a *magnificent house* to dwell in. You have not a palace that shall be as gorgeous as Solomon's—a mighty palace as immense as the dwellings of the kings of Assyria, or Babylon; but you have a God that is more than mortal creatures can behold; you dwell in an im-

mortal fabric, you dwell in the Godhead—something which is beyond all human skill. I congratulate you, moreover, that you live in such a *perfect house*. There never was a house on earth that could not be made a little better; but the house you dwell in has every thing you want; in God you have all you require. I congratulate you, moreover, that you live in a house that shall *last forever*, a dwelling-place that shall not pass away; when this world shall have been scattered like a dream; when, like the bubble on the breaker, creation shall have died away; when all this universe shall have died out like a spark from an expiring brand, your house shall live and stand more imperishable than marble, more solid than granite, self-existent as God, for it is God! Be happy then.

Now, lastly, a word of ADMONITION AND WARNING to some of you. My hearers, what a pity it is that we have to divide our congregation, that we can not speak to you in a mass as being all Christians. This morning, I would I could take God's word and address it to you all, that you all might share the sweet promises it contains. But some of you would not have them if I were to offer them. Some of you despise Christ, my blessed Master. Many of you think sin to be a trifle, and grace to be worthless, heaven to be a vision, and hell to be a fiction. Some of you are careless, and hardened, and thoughtless, without God, and without Christ. Oh! my hearers, I wonder at myself that I should have so little benevolence, that I do not preach more fervently to you. Methinks if I could get a right estimate of your souls' value that I should speak not as I do now with stammering tongue, but with flaming words. I have great cause to blush at my own slothfulness, though God knows I have striven to preach God's truth as vehemently as possible, and would spend myself in his service; but I wonder I do not stand in every street in London and preach his truth. When I think of the thousands of souls in this great city that have never heard of Jesus, that have never listened to him; when I think of how much ignorance exists, and how little gospel preaching there is, how few souls are saved, I think—O God! what little grace I must have, that I do not strive more for souls.

One word by way of *warning*. Do you know, poor soul,

that you have not a house to live in? You have a house for your body but no house for your soul. Have you ever seen a poor girl at midnight sitting down on a door-step crying? Somebody passes by, and says, "Why do you sit here?" "I have no house, sir. I have no home." "Where is your father?" "My father's dead, sir." "Where is your mother?" "I have no mother, sir." "Have you no friends?" "No friends at all." "Have you no house?" "No; I have none. I am houseless." And she shivers in the chill air, and gathers her poor ragged shawl around her, and cries again, "I have no house—I have no home." Would you not pity her? Would you blame her for her tears? Ah! there are some of you that have houseless souls here this morning. It is something to have a houseless body; but to think of a houseless soul! Methinks I see you in eternity sitting on the door-step of heaven. An angel says, "What! have you no house to live in?" "No house," says the poor soul. "Have you no father?" "No; God is not my father; and there is none beside him." "Have you no mother?" "No; the church is not my mother; I never sought her ways, nor loved Jesus. I have neither father nor mother." "Have you no house, then?" "No; I am a houseless soul." But there is one thing worse about that—houseless souls have to be sent into hell; to a dungeon, to a lake that burns with fire. Houseless soul! in a little while thy body will have gone; and where wilt thou house thyself when the hot hail of eternal vengeance comes from heaven? Where wilt thou hide thy guilty head, when the winds of the last judgment-day shall sweep on thee with fury? Where wilt thou shelter thyself, when the blast of the terrible one shall be as a storm against a wall, when the darkness of eternity comes upon thee, and hell thickens round thee? It will be all in vain for you to cry, "Rocks, hide me; mountains, fall upon me:" the rocks will not obey you, the mountains will not hide you. Caverns would be palaces if you could dwell in them, but there will be no caverns for you to hide your head in, but you will be houseless souls, houseless spirits, wandering through the shades of hell, tormented, destitute, afflicted, and that throughout eternity. Poor houseless soul, dost thou want a house? I have

a house to let this morning for every sinner who feels his misery. Do you want a house for your soul? Then I will condescend to men of low estate, and tell you in homely language, that I have a house to let. Do you ask me what is the purchase? I will tell you: it is something less than proud human nature will like to give. It is without money and without price. Ah! you would like to pay some rent wouldn't you? You would love to do something to win Christ. You can not have the house then: it is "without money and without price." I have told you enough of the house itself, and therefore I will not describe its excellences. But I will tell you one thing—that if you feel that you are a houseless soul this morning, you may have the key to-morrow; and if you feel yourself to be a houseless soul to-day, you may enter it now. If you had a house of your own I would not offer it to you; but since you have no other, here it is. Will you take my Master's house on a lease for all eternity, with nothing to pay for it, nothing but the ground-rent of loving and serving him forever? Will you take Jesus, and dwell in him throughout eternity? or will you be content to be a houseless soul? Come inside, sir; see, it is furnished from top to bottom with all you want. It has cellars filled with gold, more than you will spend as long as you live; it hath a parlor where you can entertain yourself with Christ, and feast on his love; it has tables well stored with food for you to live on forever; it hath a drawing-room of brotherly love where you can receive your friends. You will find a resting room up there where you can rest with Jesus; and on the top there is a look-out, whence you can see heaven itself. Will you have the house, or will you not? Ah! if you are houseless, you will say, "I should like to have the house; but may I have it?" Yes; there is the key. The key is, "Come to Jesus." But, you say, "I am too shabby for such a house." Never mind; there are garments inside. As Rowland Hill once said—

> "Come naked, come filthy, come ragged, come poor,
> Come wretched, come dirty, come just as you are."

If you feel guilty and condemned, come, and though the house

is too good for you, Christ will make you good enough for the house by-and-by. He will wash you, and cleanse you, and you will yet be able to sing with Moses, with the same unfaltering voice, "Lord, thou hast been *my* dwelling-place throughout all generations."

SERMON 11.

HEALING FOR THE WOUNDED: A SERMON FOR THE CRIMEAN SOLDIERS.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."—PSALM cxlvii. 3.

THE next verse finely declares the power of God. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them by their names." Perhaps there is nothing which gives us a nobler view of the greatness of God than a contemplation of the starry heavens. When by night we lift up our eyes and behold him who hath created all these things; when we remember that he bringeth out their host by number, calleth them all by their names, and that by the greatness of his power not one falleth, then indeed we adore a mighty God, and our soul naturally falls prostrate in reverential awe before the throne of him who leads the host of heaven, and marshals the stars in their armies. But the Psalmist has here placed another fact side by side with this wondrous act of God; he declares that the same God who leadeth the stars, who telleth the number of them, and calleth them by their names, healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. The next time you rise to some idea of God, by viewing the starry floor of his magnificent temple above, strive to compel your contemplation to this thought, that the same mighty hand which rolls the stars along, puts liniments around the wounded heart; that the same being who spoke worlds into existence, and now impels those ponderous globes through their orbits, does in his mercy cheer the wounded, and heal the broken in heart.

We will not delay you by a preface, but will come at once to the two thoughts: first, here is *a great ill*—a broken heart;

and, secondly, *a great mercy*—"*he healeth* the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

Man is a double being: he is composed of body and soul, and each of the portions of man may receive injury and hurt. The wounds of the body are extremely painful, and if they amount to a breaking of the frame the torture is singularly exquisite. Yet God has in his mercy provided means whereby wounds may be healed and injuries repaired. The soldier who retires from the battle-field, knows that he shall find a hand to extricate the shot, and certain ointments and liniments to heal his wounds. We very speedily care for bodily diseases; they are too painful to let us slumber in silence: and they soon urge us to seek a physician or a surgeon for our healing. Oh, if we were as much alive to the more serious wounds of our inner man; if we were as deeply sensible of spiritual injuries, how earnestly should we cry to "the Beloved Physician," and how soon should we prove his power to save. Stabbed in the most vital part by the hand of our original parent, and from head to foot disabled by our own sin, we yet remain insensible as steel, careless and unmoved, because, though our wounds are known they are not felt. We should count that soldier foolish, who would be more anxious to repair a broken helmet than an injured limb. Are not we even more to be condemned, when we give precedence to the perishing fabric of the body, and neglect the immortal soul? You, however, who have *broken hearts*, can no longer be insensible; you have felt *too* acutely to slumber in indifference. Your bleeding spirit cries for consolation: may my glorious *Master* give me a word in season for you. We intend to address you upon the important subject of broken hearts, and the great healing provided for them.

I. Let us commence with *the great ill*—a broken heart. What is it? We reply, there are several forms of a broken heart. Some are what we shall call naturally broken, and some are spiritually so. We will occupy a moment by mentioning certain forms of this evil, naturally considered; and verily our task would be a dreary one, if we were called upon to witness one tithe of the misery endured by those who suffer from a broken heart.

There have been hearts broken by *desertion.* A wife has been neglected by her husband who was once the subject of her attachment, and whom even now she tenderly loves. Scorned and despised by the man who once lavished upon her every token of his affection, she has known what a broken heart means. A friend is forsaken by one upon whom he leaned, to whose very soul he was knit, so that their two hearts had grown into one; and he feels that his heart is broken, for the other half of himself is severed from him. When Ahithophel forsakes David, when the kind friend unto whom we have always told our sorrows betrays our confidence, the consequence may possibly be a broken heart. The desertion of a man by his fellows, the ingratitude of children to their parents, the unkindness of parents to their children, the betrayal of secrets by a comrade, the changeableness and fickleness of friends, with other modes of desertion which happen in this world, have brought about broken hearts. We know not a more fruitful source of broken hearts than disappointment in the objects of our affections—to find that we have been deceived where we have placed our confidence. It is not simply that we leaned upon a broken reed, and the reed has snapped—that were bad enough—but in the fall we fell upon a thorn which pierced our heart to its center. Many have there been who have gone to their graves, not smitten by disease, not slain by the sword, but with a far direr wound than the sword could ever give, a more desperate death than poison could ever cause. May you never know such agony.

We have also seen hearts broken by *bereavement.* We have known tender wives who have laid their husbands in the tomb, and who have stood by the grave-side until their very heart did break for solitary anguish. We have seen parents bereaved of their beloved offspring one after another; and when they have been called to hear the solemn words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," over the last of their children, they have turned away from the grave, bidding adieu to joy, longing for death, and abhorring life. To such the world becomes a prison, cheerless, cold, unutterably miserable. The owl and bittern seem alone to sympathize with them, and

aught of joy in the wide world appears to be but intended as a mockery to their misery. Divine grace, however, can sustain them even here.

How frequently might this be supposed to occur to our brave countrymen engaged in the present war. Do not they feel, and feel acutely, the loss of their comrades? You will perhaps imagine that the slaughter and death around them prevent the tender feelings of nature. You are enough mistaken, if so you dream. The soldier's heart may never know fear, but it has not forgotten sympathy. The fearful struggle around renders it impossible to pay the usual court and homage at the gates of sorrow, but there is more of real grief oftimes in the hurried midnight funeral than in the flaunting pageantry of your pompous processions. Were it in our power to walk among the tents, we should find abundant need to use the words of our text by way of cordial to many a warrior who has seen all his chosen companions fall before the destroyer.

Oh, ye mourners! seek ye a balm for your wounds—let me proclaim it unto you. Ye are not ignorant of it, I trust, but let me apply that in which you already place your confidence. The God of heaven knows your sorrows, repair you to his throne, and tell your simple tale of woe. Then cast your burden on *him*, he will bear it—open your heart before *him*, he will heal it. Think not that you are beyond hope. You would be if there were no God of love and pity; but while Jehovah lives, the mourner need not despair.

Penury has also contributed its share to the number of the army of misery. Pinching want, a noble desire to walk erect, without the crutch of charity, and inability to obtain employment, have at times driven men to desperate measures. Many a goodly cedar hath withered for lack of moisture, and so hath many a man pined away beneath the deprivations of extreme poverty. Those who are blessed with sufficiency can scarcely guess the pain endured by the sons of want, especially if they have once been rich. Yet, oh! child of suffering, be thou patient, God has not passed thee over in his providence. Feeder of sparrows, he will also furnish *you* with what you need. Sit not down in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take

up arms against a sea of troubles, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. *There is* One who careth for you. One eye is fixed on you, even in the home of your destitution, one heart beats with pity for your woes, and a hand omnipotent shall yet stretch you out the needed help. The darkest cloud shall yet scatter itself in its season, the blackest gloom shall have its morning. *He*, if thou art one of his family, with bands of grace will bind up thy wounds, and heal thy broken heart.

Multiplied also are the cases where *disappointment and defeat* have crushed the spirits. The soldier fighting for his country may see the ranks broken, but he will not be broken in heart, so long as there remains a single hope for victory. His comrade reels behind him, and he himself is wounded, but with a shout he cries, "On! on!" and scales the ramparts. Sword in hand, still he goes, carrying terror among the foe, himself sustained by the prospect of victory. But let him once hear the shout of defeat where he hoped for triumph; let him know that the banner is stained in the earth, that the eagle has been snatched from the standard; let him once hear it said, "They fly, they fly!" let him see the officers and soldiers flying in confusion; let him be well assured that the most heroic courage and the most desperate valor are of no avail, then his heart bursteth under a sense of dishonor, and he is almost content to die because the honor of his country has been tarnished, and her glory has been stained in the dust. Of this, the soldiers of Britain know but little—may they speedily carve out a peace for us with their victorious swords! Truly, in the great conflict of life we can bear any thing but defeat. Toils on toils would we endure to climb a summit, but if we must die ere we reach it, that were a brokenness of heart indeed. To accomplish the object on which we have set our minds, we would spend our very heart's blood; but once let us see that our life's purpose is not to be accomplished; let us, when we hope to grasp the crown, see that it is withdrawn, or other hands have seized it, then cometh brokenness of heart. But let us remember, whether we have been broken in heart by penury or by defeat, that there is a hand which "bindeth up the broken in heart, and healeth

all their wounds;" that even these natural breakings are regarded by Jehovah, who, in the plenitude of his mercy, giveth a balm for every wound to every one of his people. We need not ask, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" There is a balm, there is a physician who can heal all these natural wounds, who can give joy to the troubled countenance, take the furrow from the brow, wipe the tear from the eye, remove the agitation from the bosom, and calm the heart now swelling with grief; for he "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

But all that we have mentioned of woe and sorrow which the natural heart endures, is not sufficient to explain our text. The heart broken, not by distress or disappointment, but on account of sin, is the heart which God peculiarly delights to heal. All other sufferings may find a fearful center in one breast, and yet the subject of them may be unpardoned and unsaved; but if the heart be broken by the Holy Ghost for sin, salvation will be its ultimate issue, and heaven its result. At the time of regeneration, the soul is subject to an inward work, causing at the time considerable suffering. This suffering does not continue after the soul has learned the preciousness of a Saviour's blood; but while it lasts it produces an effect which is never forgotten in after life. Let none suppose that the pains we are about to describe are the constant companions of an heir of heaven during his entire existence. They are like the torture of a great drunkard at the time of his reformation, rendered needful, not by the reformation, but by his old habits. So this broken heart is felt at the time of that change of which the Bible speaks, when it says: "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." The fruit of the Spirit is afterwards joy and peace; but for a reason we must, if saved, endure much mental agony.

Are any of you at the present moment disturbed in mind, and vexed in spirit, because you have violated the commands of God? And are you anxious to know whether these feelings are tokens of genuine brokenness and contrition? Hear me, then, while I briefly furnish you with tests whereby you may discern the truth and value of your repentance.

1. We can not conceive it possible that you are broken in

heart if the pleasures of the world are your delight. We may consent to call you amiable, estimable, and honorable, even should you mix somewhat in the amusements of life; but it would be a treason to your common sense to tell you that such things are consistent with a broken heart. Will any venture to assert that yon gay reveler has a broken heart? Would he not consider it an insult should you suggest it? Does the libidinous song now defiling the ear proceed from the lips of a broken-hearted sinner? Can the fountain, when filled with sorrow, send forth such streams as these? No, my friends; the wanton, the libidinous, the rioting, and the profane, are too wise to lay claim to the title of broken-hearted persons, seeing that their claim would be palpably absurd. They scorn the name, as mean and paltry, unworthy of a man who loves free living, and counts religion *cant*.

But should there be one of you so entirely deceived by the evil spirit as to think yourself a partaker in the promises, while you are living in the lusts of the flesh, let me solemnly warn you of your error. He who sincerely repents of sin will hate it, and find no pleasure in it; and during the season when his heart is broken, he will loathe, even to detestation, the very approach of evil. The song of mirth will then be as a dirge in his ear. "As he that poureth vinegar upon niter, so is he that singeth songs to a sad heart." If the man who makes merry with sin be broken-hearted, he must be a prince of hypocrites, for he feigns to be worse than he is. We know right well that the wounded spirit requires other cordials than this world can afford. A soul disturbed by guilt must be lulled to a peaceful rest by other music than carnal pleasures can afford it. The tavern, the house of vice, and the society of the profligate, are no more to be endured by a contrite soul than the jostling of a crowd by a wounded man.

2. Again; we will not for one moment allow that a *self-righteous man* can have a broken heart. Ask him to pray, and he thanks God that he is every way correct. What need has he to weep because of the iniquity of his life? for he firmly believes himself to be well-deserving, and far enough removed from guilt. He has attended his religious duties, he is exceedingly strict in the form of his devotions; or if he cares

not for such things, he is, at any rate, quite as good as those who do. He was never in bondage to any man, but can look to heaven without a tear for his sin. Do not conceive that I am painting an imaginary case, for there are unfortunately too many of these proud, self-exalting men. Will they be angry with me when I tell them that they are no nearer heaven than those whom we reproved a few moments ago? or will they not be equally moved to wrath if I were so much as to hint that they need to be broken in heart for their sin? Nevertheless, such is the case; and Pharisees shall one day learn with terror, that self-righteousness is hateful to God.

But what is a broken heart? I say, first, that a broken heart implies *a very deep and poignant sorrow on account of sin.* A heart broken—conceive of that. If you could look within and see every thing going on in this great mystery called man, you would marvel at the wonders thereof; but how much more astonished would you be to see its heart not merely divided in twain, but split into atoms. You would exclaim, "What misery must have done this! What a heavy blow must have fallen here!" By nature the heart is of one solid piece, hard as a nether millstone; but when God smites it, it is broken to pieces in deep suffering. Some will understand me when I describe the state of the man who is feeling a sorrow for sin. In the morning he bends his knees in prayer, but he feels afraid to pray. He thinks it is blasphemy for him to venture near God's throne; and when he does pray at all, he rises with the thought: "God can not hear me, for he heareth not sinners." He goes about his business, and is, perhaps, a little liverted; but at every interval the same black thought rolls upon him: "*Thou art condemned already.*" Mark his person and appearance. A melancholy has rested upon him. At night he goes home, but there is little enjoyment for him in the household. He may smile, but his smile ill conceals the grief which lurks underneath. When again he bends the knee, he fears the shadows of the night; he dreads to be on his bed, lest it should be his tomb; and if he lies awake, he thinks of death, the second death, damnation, and destruction; or if he dreams, he dreams of demons, and flames of hell. He wakes again, and almost

feels the torture of which he dreamed. He wishes in the morning it were evening, and at evening it were light. "I loathe my daily food," says he: "I care for nothing; for I have not Christ. I have not mercy, I have not peace." He has set off running on the road to heaven, and he puts his fingers in his ears, and will hear of nothing else. Tell him of a ball or concert!—it is nothing to him. He can enjoy nothing. You might put him in a heaven, and it would be a hell to him. Not the chants of the redeemed, not the hallelujahs of the glorified, not the hymns of flaming cherubs, would charm woe out of this man, so long as he is the subject of a broken heart. Now, I do not say that all must have the same amount of suffering before they arrive at heaven. I am speaking of some who have this especial misery of heart on account of sin. They are utterly miserable. As Bunyan has said: "They are considerably tumbled up and down in their souls." And conceive, that "as the Lord their God liveth, there is but a step between themselves and eternal death." Oh, blessings on the Lord forever! if any of you are in that condition, here is the mercy! Though this wound be not provided for in earthly pharmacy, though there be found no physician who can heal it, yet "he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." It is a blessing to have a broken heart at all.

Again, when a man has a broken heart, he not only feels sorrow for sin, but he feels himself *utterly unable to get rid of it.* He who believes himself able to save himself has never known the meaning of a broken heart. Those who imagine that reformation can atone for the past, or secure righteousness for the future, are not yet savingly brought to know themselves. No, my friends, we must be humbled in the dust, and made to look for all in Christ, or else we shall be deceived after all. But are you driven out of yourself; are you like the wounded soldier crying for some one else to carry you to the hospital of mercy, and longing for the aid of a mightier than yourself? then be of good cheer, there shall be found a great deliverance for you. So long as you trust in ceremonies, prayers, or good works, you shall not find eternal grace; but when stripped of all strength and power, you shall

gain a glorious salvation in the Lord Jesus. If morality can join the pieces of a broken heart, the cement shall soon cease to bind, and the man shall again be as vile as ever. We must have a new heart and a right spirit, or vain will be all our hopes.

Need I give any other description of the character I desire to comfort. I trust you are discovered. Oh! my poor brother, grieve to see thee in distress, but there is pardon through Jesus—there is forgiveness even for thee. What though your sins lie like a millstone on your shoulders, they shall not sink you down to hell. Arise! He, my gracious Lord, calleth thee. Throw thyself at his feet, and lose thy griefs in his loving and cheering words. Thou art saved if thou canst say,

> "A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
> On Christ's kind arms I fall;
> He is my strength and righteousness,
> My Jesus, and my all."

II. We have spoken a long time on the great ill of a broken heart; our second thought will be the *great mercy*—"He *healeth* the broken in heart."

First, he *only* does it. Men may alleviate suffering, they may console the afflicted and cheer the distressed; but they can not heal the broken in heart, nor bind up their wounds. It is not human eloquence, or mortal wisdom; it is not the oration of an Apollos, nor the wondrous words of a prince of preachers; it is the "still small voice" of God which alone confers the "peace which passeth all understanding." The binding of the heart is a thing done immediately by God, ofttimes without any instrumentality whatever; and when instrumentality is used, it is always in such a way that the man does not extol the instrument, but renders grateful homage to God. In *breaking* hearts, God uses man continually; repeated fiery sermons, and terrible denunciations do break men's hearts; but you will bear me witness when your hearts were *healed* God only did it. You value the minister that broke your heart; but it is not often that we ascribe the healing to any instrumentality whatever. The act of justification is generally apart from all means: God only does it. I know not the man who uttered the words that were the means of

relieving my heart: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." I do not recollect what he said in the sermon, and I am sure I do not care to know. I found Jesus there and then, and that was enough for me. When you get your wounds healed, even under a minister, it seems as if it were not the minister who spoke; you never heard him speak like it in all your life before. You say, "I have often heard him with pleasure, but he has outdone himself; *before*, he spoke to my ear, but *now*, to my heart. We are some of us rejoicing in the liberty of Christ, and walking in all the joy of the Spirit; but it is to God we owe our deliverance, and we are grateful neither to man nor book, so much as to the great Physician who has taken pity on us. O that Jesus would walk through this Bethesda now. O, poor, sick dying man! does guilt weigh heavy on thy soul, turn not to any helper, save to him that sitteth on the throne.

Then he only *can* do it. I defy any of my brethren to bind up a broken heart. I have often labored to do it, but could never effect it. I have said a word to console the mourner, but I have felt that I have done but little, or have perhaps put the wrong mixture in the cup. He only can do it. Some of you seek mercy through baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or regular attendance at the house of prayer. Some of you, again, have certain forms and observances to which you attach saving value. As the Lord liveth, none of these things bind up the broken in heart apart from the Holy Spirit; they are empty wind and air; you may have them and be lost. You can have no peace and comfort unless you have immediate dealings with God, who alone, as the great Physician, healeth the broken in heart. Ah! there are some of you who go to your ministers with broken hearts, and say, "What shall I do?" I have heard of a preacher who told his anxious hearer, "You are getting melancholy; you had better go to such and such a place of amusement; you are getting too dreary and melancholy by half." O, to think of a nurse in a hospital administering poison, when she ought to be giving the true medicine! If he deserves to be hung who mixes poison with his drugs, how much more guilty is that man who tells a soul to seek for happiness where there is none, who sends it to a

carnal world for joy, when there is none to be found except in God.

Then again, God only *may* do it. Suppose we could heal your broken heart, it would be good for nothing. I do beseech the Lord that I may never get a broken heart healed, except it is by God. A truly-convinced sinner will always rather keep his heart broken than have it healed wrongly. I ask you, who are suffering, whether you would not rather keep your broken heart as it is, than allow a bad physician to cure it for you, and so deceive you, and send you to hell at last? I know your cry is, "Lord, let me know the worst of my case; use the lancet; do not be afraid of hurting me; let me feel it all; cut the proud-flesh away rather than let it remain." But there are not a few who get their wounds glossed over by some pretended good works or duties. O, my hearer, let no man deceive you! Be not content with a name to live while you are really dead. Bad money may pass on earth, but genuine gold alone will be received in heaven. Can *you* abide the fire?

In vain your presumption when God shall come to examine you; you will not pass muster unless you have had a real healing from his hand. It is easy enough to get religious notions and fancy yourself safe, but a real saving work is the work of God, and God alone. Seek not to the priest; he may console, but it is by deluding you. Seek not to your own self; for you may soothe yourself into the sleep of perdition. See that thine heart be washed in the blood of Jesus; be careful that the Holy Spirit has his temple in it; and may God, of his great and sovereign grace, look to thee that thou deceivest not thyself.

But next, God *will* do it. That is a sweet thought. "He healeth the broken in heart;" he WILL do it. Nobody else can; nobody else may; but he will. Is thy heart broken? He WILL heal it; he is sure to heal it; for it is written—and it can never be altered, for what was true three thousand years ago, is true now—"he healeth the broken in heart." Did Saul of Tarsus rejoice after three days of blindness? Yes, and you shall be delivered also. O, it is a theme for eternal gratitude, that the same God who in his loftiness and omnipotence stooped down in olden times to soothe, cherish, relieve

and bless the mourner, is even now taking his journeys of mercy among the penitent sons of men. O, I beseech him to come where thou art sitting, and put his hand inside thy soul, and if he finds there a broken heart to bind it up. Poor sinner, breathe thy wish to him; let thy sigh come before him, for "he healeth the broken in heart." There thou liest wounded on the plain. "Is there no physician?" thou criest; "is there none?" Around thee lie thy fellow-sufferers, but they are as helpless as thyself. Thy mournful cry cometh back without an answer, and space alone hears thy groan. Ah! the battle-field of sin has one kind visitor; it is not abandoned to the vultures of remorse and despair. I hear footsteps approaching; they are the gentle footsteps of Jehovah. With a heart full of mercy, he is hasting to his repenting child. In his hands there are no thunders, in his eyes no anger, on his lips no threatening. See how he bows himself over the mangled heart! Hear how he speaks! "Come, now, and let us reason together," saith the Lord: "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And if the patient dreads to look in the face of the mighty being who addresses him, the same loving mouth whispers, "I, even I, and he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my name's sake." See how he washes every wound with sacred water from the side of Jesus; mark how he spreads the ointment of forgiving grace, and binds around each wound the fair white linen, which is the righteousness of saints. Doth the mourner faint under the operation? he puts a cordial to his lips, exclaiming, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Yes, it is true—most true—neither dream nor fiction, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

How *condescending* is the Lord of heaven, thus to visit poor forlorn man. The queen has kindly visited the hospitals of our soldiers to cheer, by her royal words, her loyal defenders, by this she has done herself honor, and her soldiers love her for it. But when the God of the whole earth, the infinite Creator, stoops to become a servant to his own creatures, can you conceive the majestic condescension which bows itself in mercy over the miserable heart, and with loving finger closes

the gaping wounds of the spirit. Oh, sin-sick sinner! the King of heaven will not despise *thee*, but thou too shalt find him thy Comforter, who healeth all thy diseases. Mark, moreover, how tenderly he does it. You remember that passage in the Psalms: "Loving kindness and *tender* mercies." God's mercies are "tender mercies;" when he undertakes to bind up the broken in heart, he always uses the softest liniment. He is not like your army surgeon, who hurries along and says "A leg off here, an arm off there;" but he comes gently and sympathizingly. He does not use roughness with us; but with downy fingers he putteth the wound together, and layeth the plaster on; yea, he doth it in such a soft and winning way, that we are full of wonder to think he could be so kind to such unworthy ones.

Then he does it *securely*, so that the wound can not open again. If he puts on his plaster, it is heaven's court-plaster, and it never fails. If he heals, he heals effectually. No man who is once saved of God shall ever be lost. If we receive mercy by faith, we shall never lose it. When God heals once, he heals forever. Although some who teach false doctrine do assert that children of God may be lost, they have no warrant in Scripture, nor in experience, for we know that he keepeth the saints. He who is once forgiven, can not be punished. He who is once regenerated, can not perish. He who is once healed, shall never find his soul sick unto death. Blessings on his name, some of us have felt his skill, and known his mighty power; and were our hearts broken now, we would not stop a moment, but go at once to his feet, and we would cry, 'O thou that bindest the broken in heart, bind ours; thou that healest wounds, heal ours, we beseech thee."

And now, my hearers and readers, a parting word with you. Are you careless and ungodly? Permit your friend to speak with you. Is it true that after death there is a judgment? Do you believe that when *you* die, *you* will be called to stand before the bar of God? Do you know that there is a hell of eternal flame appointed for the wicked? Yes—you know and believe all this—and yet you are going down to hell thoughtless and unconcerned—you are living in constant and

fearful jeopardy of your lives—without a friend on the other side the grave. Ah, how changed will your note be soon! You have turned away from rebuke, you have laughed at warning, but laughter will then give place to sighs, and your singing to yells of agony. Bethink thee, oh my brother man, ere thou dost again peril thy life. What wilt thou do if thy soul is required of thee? Canst thou endure the terrors of the Almighty? Canst thou dwell in everlasting burnings? Were thy bones of iron, and thy ribs of brass, the sight of the coming judgment would make thee tremble; forbear then to mock at religion, cease to blaspheme your Maker, for remember, you will soon meet him face to face, and how will you then account for your insults heaped upon his patient person? May the Lord yet humble thee before him.

But I am seeking the distressed one, and I am impatient to be the means of his comfort. It may be my words are now sounding in the ear of one of my weary wounded fellow-countrymen. You have been long time tossing on the bed of languishing, and the time for thought has been blessed to your soul by God. You are now feeling the guilt of your life, and are lamenting the sins of your conduct. You fear there is no hope of pardon, no prospect of forgiveness, and you tremble lest death should lead your guilty soul unforgiven before its Maker. Hear, then, the word of God. Thy pains for sins are God's work in thy soul. He woundeth thee that thou mayest seek him. He would not have showed thee thy sin if he did not intend to pardon. Thou art now a sinner, and Jesus came to save sinners, therefore he came to save thee; yea, he is saving thee now. These strivings of soul are the work of his mercy; there is love in every blow, and grace in every stripe. Believe, O troubled one, that he is able to save thee unto the uttermost, and thou shalt not believe in vain. Now, in the silence of your agony, look unto him who by his stripes healeth thee. Jesus Christ has suffered the penalty of thy sins, and has endured the wrath of God on thy behalf. See you, yonder crucified Man on Calvary, and mark thee that those drops of blood are falling for *thee*, those nailed hands are pierced *for thee*, and that opened side contains a heart within it, full of love *to thee*.

"None but Jesus! none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good!"

It is simple reliance on him which saves. The negro said, "Massa, I fall flat on de promise;" so if you fall flat on the promise of Jesus, you shall not find him fail you; he will bind up your heart, and make an end to the days of your mourning. We shall meet in heaven one day, to sing hallelujah to the condescending Lord; till then, may the God of all grace be our helper. Amen.

'The mighty God will not despise
The contrite heart for sacrifice;
The deep-fetched sigh, the secret groan,
Rises accepted to the throne.

He meets, with tokens of his grace,
The trembling lip, the blushing face;
His bowels yearn when sinners pray;
And mercy bears their sins away

When filled with grief, o'erwhelmed with shame,
He, pitying, heals their broken frame;
He hears the r sad complaints, and spies
His image in their weeping eyes."

SERMON III.

THE PECULIAR SLEEP OF THE BELOVED.

"*So* he giveth his beloved sleep." —PSALM CXXVII. 2.

THE sleep of the body is the gift of God. So said Homer of old, when he described it as descending from the clouds, and resting on the tents of the warriors around old Troy. And so sang Virgil, when he spoke of Palinurus falling asleep upon the prow of the ship. Sleep is the gift of God. We think that we lay our heads upon our pillows, and compose our bodies in a peaceful posture, and that, therefore, we naturally and necessarily sleep. But it is not so. Sleep is the gift of God; and not a man would close his eyes did not God put his fingers on his eyelids; did not the Almighty send a soft and balmy influence over his frame which lulled his thoughts into quiescence, making him enter into that blissful state of rest which we call sleep. True, there be some drugs and narcotics whereby men can poison themselves well-nigh to death, and then call it sleep; but the sleep of the healthy body is the gift of God. He bestows it; he rocks the cradle for us every night; he draws the curtain of darkness; he bids the sun shut up his burning eyes; and then he comes and says, "Sleep, sleep; my child, I give thee sleep." Have you not known what it is at times to lie upon your bed and strive to slumber? and, as it is said of Darius, so might it be said of you: "the king sent for his musicians, but his sleep went from him." You have attempted it, but you could not do it; it is beyond your power to procure a healthy repose. You imagine, if you fix your mind upon a certain subject until it shall engross your attention, you will then sleep; but you find yourself unable to do so. Ten thousand things drive through

your brain as if the whole earth were agitated before you. You see all things you ever beheld, dancing in a wild phantasmagoria before your eyes. You close your eyes, but still you see; and there be things in your ear, and head, and brain, which will not let you sleep. It is God alone, who alike seals up the sea-boy's eyes upon the giddy mast, and gives the monarch rest, for with all appliances and means to boot, *he* could not rest without the aid of God. It is God who steeps the mind in Lethe, and bids us slumber, that our bodies may be refreshed, so that for to-morrow's toil we may rise recruited and strengthened. O, my friends, how thankful should we be for sleep! Sleep is the best physician that I know of. Sleep hath healed more pains of wearied bones than the most eminent physicians upon earth. It is the best medicine; the choicest thing of all the names which are written in all the lists of pharmacy. There is nothing like to sleep! What a mercy it is that it belongs alike to all! God does not make sleep the boon of the rich man, he does not give it merely to the noble or the rich, so that they can keep it as a peculiar luxury to themselves; but he bestows it upon all. Yea, if there be a difference, the sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much. He who toils, sleeps all the sounder for his toil. While luxurious effeminacy can not rest, tossing itself from side to side, upon a bed of eider down, the hard-working laborer, with his strong and powerful limbs, worn out and tired, throws himself upon his hard couch and sleeps; and waking, thanks God that he has been refreshed. You know not, my friends, how much you owe to God, that he gives you rest at night. If you had sleepless nights, you would then value the blessing. If for weeks you lay tossing on your weary bed, you then would thank God for this favor. But, as it is the gift of God, it is a gift most precious, one that can not be valued until it is taken away; yea, even then we can not appreciate it as we ought.

The Psalmist says, there are some men who deny themselves sleep. For purposes of gain, or ambition, they rise up early and sit up late. Some of us who are here present may have been guilty of the same thing. We have risen early in the morning that we might turn over the ponderous volume,

in order to acquire knowledge; we have sat at night until our burned-out lamp has chidden us, and told us that the sun was rising; while our eyes have ached, our brain has throbbed, our heart has palpitated. We have been weary and worn out; we have risen up early and sat up late, and have in that way come to eat the bread of sorrow. Many of you business men are toiling in that style. We do not condemn you for it; we do not forbid rising up early and sitting up late; but we remind you of this text: "It is vain to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow; for so he giveth his beloved sleep." And it is of this sleep that God gives to his beloved, that we mean to speak this morning, as God shall help us—a sleep peculiar to the children of God—a sleep which he gives to "his beloved."

Sleep is sometimes used in a bad sense in the word of God, to express the condition of carnal and worldly men. Some men have the sleep of carnal ease and sloth: of whom Solomon tells us, they are unwise sons that slumber in the harvest, causing shame; so that when the harvest is spent, and the summer is ended, they are not saved. Sleep often expresses a state of sloth, of deadness, of indifference, in which all ungodly men are found, according to the words, "It is time for us to awake out of sleep." "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us who are of the day be sober." There be many who are sleeping the sluggard's sleep, who are resting upon the bed of sloth; but an awful waking shall it be to them, when they shall find that the time of their probation has been wasted; that the golden sands of their life have dropped unheeded from the hour-glass; and that they have come into that world where there are no acts of pardon passed, no hope, no refuge, no salvation.

In other places, you find sleep used as the figure of carnal security, in which so many are found. Look at Saul lying asleep in fleshly security—not like David, when he said, "I lay me down in sleep, for thou, Lord, makest me dwell in safety." Abner lay there, and all the troops lay around him—but Abner slept. Sleep on, Saul, sleep on. But there is an Abishai standing at thy pillow, and, with a spear in his hand, he says, "Let me smite him even to the earth at once." Still he

sleeps; he knows it not. Such are many of you, sleeping in jeopardy of your souls; Satan is standing, the law is ready, vengeance is eager, and all saying, "Shall I smite him? I will smite him this once, and he shall never wake again." Christ says, "Stay, vengeance, stay." Lo, the spear is even now quivering—"Stay, spare it yet another year, in the hope that he may yet wake from the long sleep of his sin." Like Sisera, I tell thee, sinner, thou art sleeping in the tent of the destroyer; thou mayst have eaten butter and honey out of a goodly dish; but thou art sleeping on the doorstep of hell: even now the enemy is lifting up the hammer and the nail to smite thee through thy temples and fasten thee to the earth, that there thou mayst lie forever in the death of everlasting torment—if it may be called a death.

Then there is also mentioned in Scripture a sleep of lust, like that which Samson had when he lost his locks, and such sleep as many have when they indulge in sin, and wake to find themselves stripped, lost, and ruined. There is also the sleep of negligence, such as the virgins had, when it is said, "they all slumbered and slept;" and the sleep of sorrow, which overcame Peter, James, and John. But none of these are the gift of God. They are incident to the frailty of our nature; they come upon us because we are fallen men; they creep over us because we are the sons of a lost and ruined parent. These sleeps are not the benisons of God; nor does he bestow them on his beloved. We now come to tell you what those sleeps are which he does bestow.

1. First, there is a miraculous sleep which God has sometimes given to his beloved—which he does not now vouchsafe. Into that kind of miraculous sleep, or rather trance, fell Adam, when he slept sorrowfully and alone; but when he awoke, he was no more so, for God had given him that best gift which he had then bestowed on man. The same sleep Abraham had, when it is said, that a deep sleep came on him, and he lay him down, and saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, while a voice said to him, "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Such a hallowed sleep also was that of Jacob, when, with a stone for his pillow, the hedges for his curtains, the heavens for his canopy

the winds for his music, and the beasts for his servants, he laid him down and slumbered. Dreaming, he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Such a sleep had Joseph, when he dreamed that the other sheaves made obeisance to his sheaf, and that the sun, moon, and seven stars were subject unto him. So ofttimes did David rest, when his sleep was sweet unto him, as we have just read. And such a sleep was that of Daniel, when he said, "I was asleep upon my face, and behold the Lord said unto me, Arise, and stand upon thy feet." And such, moreover, was the sleep of the reputed father of our blessed Lord, when, in a vision of the night, an angel said unto him, "Arise, Joseph, and take the young child and his mother, and go into Egypt, for behold, there be some who seek his life to take it away." These are miraculous slumbers. God's angel hath touched his servants with the magic wand of sleep, and they have slept, not simply as we do, but slept a wondrous sleep; they have dived into the tenfold depths of slumber; they have plunged into a sea of sleep, where they have seen the invisible, talked with the unknown, and heard mystic and wondrous sounds: and when they have awoke, they have said, "What a sleep! Surely, my sleep was sweet unto me." "So he giveth his beloved sleep."

But, now-a-days we do not have such sleeps as these. Many persons dream very wonderful things, but most people dream nonsense. Some persons put faith in dreams; and, certainly, God doth warn us in dreams and visions even now. I am sure he does. There is not a man but can mention one or more instances of a warning, or a benefit, he has received in a dream. But we never trust dreams. We remember what Rowland Hill said to a lady, who knew she was a child of God, because she dreamed such and such a thing: "Never mind, ma'am, what you did when you were asleep; let us see what you do when you are awake." That is my opinion of dreams. I never will believe a man to be a Christian merely because he has dreamed himself one; for a dreamy religion will make a man a dreamer all his life—and such dreamers will have an awful waking at last, if that is all they have to trust to.

II. He gives his beloved, in the second place, the sleep of a *quiet conscience.* I think most of you saw that splendid picture, in the exhibition of the Royal Academy—the Sleep of Argyle—where he lay, slumbering, on the very morning before his execution. You saw some noblemen standing there, looking at him, almost with compunction; the jailor is there, with his keys rattling; but positively the man sleeps, though tomorrow morning his head shall be severed from his body, and a man shall hold it up and say, "This was the head of a traitor." He slept because he had a quiet conscience; for he had done no wrong. Then look at Peter. Did you ever notice that remarkable passage, where it is said that Herod intended to bring out Peter on the morrow; but, behold, as Peter was sleeping between two guards, the angel smote him? *Sleeping between two guards*, when on the morrow he was to be crucified or slain. He cared not, for his heart was clear; he had committed no ill. He could say, "If it be right to serve God or man, judge ye;" and, therefore, he laid him down and slept. O sirs! do you know what the sleep of a quiet conscience is? Have you ever stood out and been the butt of calumny—pelted by all men; the object of scorn—the laugh, the song of the drunkard? And have you known what it is, after all, to sleep, as if you cared for nothing, because your heart was pure? Ah! ye who are in debt—ah! ye who are dishonest—ah! ye who love not God, and love not Christ—I wonder ye can sleep, for sin doth put pricking thorns in the pillow. Sin puts a dagger in a man's bed, so that whichever way he turns it pricks him. But a quiet conscience is the sweetest music that can lull the soul to sleep. The demon of restlessness does not come to that man's bed who has a quiet conscience—a conscience right with God—who can sing,

> "With the world, myself, and thee,
> I, ere I sleep, at peace shall be."

"So he giveth his beloved sleep."

But let me tell you who have no knowledge of your election in Christ Jesus, no trust in the ransom of a Saviour's blood—you, who have never been called by the Holy Ghost—you, who never were regenerated and born again—let me tell

you that you do not know this slumber. You may say, your conscience is quiet; you may say, you do no man any wrong, and that you believe, at the bar of God, you shall have little to account for. But, sirs, you know you have sinned; and your virtues can not atone for your vices. You know that the soul that sinneth, if it sins but once, must die. If the picture has a single flaw, it is not a perfect one. If you have sinned but once, you shall be damned for it, unless you have something to take away that one sin. You do not know this sleep, but the Christian does, for all his sins were numbered on the "scape-goat's head of old." Christ has died for all his sins, however great or enormous; and there is not now a sin written against him in the book of God. "I, even I," says God, "am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and I will not remember thy sins." Now thou mayest sleep; for "so he giveth his beloved sleep."

III. Again: there is *the sleep of contentment* which the Christian enjoys. How few people in this world are satisfied. No man ever need fear offering a reward of a thousand pounds to a contented man; for if any one came to claim the reward, he would, of course, prove his discontent. We are all in a measure, I suspect, dissatisfied with our lot; the great majority of mankind are always on the wing: they never settle: they never light on any tree to build their nest; but they are always fluttering from one to the other. This tree is not green enough, that is not high enough, this is not beautiful enough, that is not picturesque enough; so they are ever on the wing, and never build a peaceful nest at all. The Christian builds his nest; and as the noble Luther said, "Like yon little bird upon the tree, he hath fed himself to-night—he knoweth not where his breakfast is to-morrow. He sitteth there while the wind rocks the tree: he shuts his eyes, puts his head under his wing, and sleeps; and, when he awakes in the morning, sings,

> "'Mortals, cease from toil and sorrow;
> God provideth for the morrow.'"

How few are there who have that blessed contentment—who can say, "I want nothing else; I want but little here below—yea, I long for nothing more—I am satisfied—I am content."

You sung a beautiful hymn just now; but I suspect that many of you had no right to it, because you did not feel it.

> "With thy will I leave the rest,
> Grant me but this one request;
> Both in life and death to prove
> Tokens of thy special love."

Could you say there was nothing you wanted on earth, save Jesus? Did you mean that you were perfectly content—that you had the sleep of contentment? Ah! no. You, who are apprentices, are sighing till you shall be journeymen; you who are journeymen, are groaning to be masters; masters are longing till they shall retire from business, and when they have retired, they are longing that all their children shall be settled in life. Man always looks for a yet-beyond: he is a mariner who never gets to port; an arrow which never reaches the target. Ah! the Christian hath sleep. One night I could not rest, and in the wild wanderings of my thoughts I met this text and communed with it: "So he giveth his beloved sleep." In my reverie, as I was on the border of the land of dreams, methought I was in a castle. Around its massive walls there ran a deep moat. Watchmen paced the walls both day and night. It was a fine old fortress, bidding defiance to the foe; but I was not happy in it. I thought I lay upon a couch; but scarcely had I closed my eyes, ere a trumpet blew, "To arms! To arms!" and when the danger was overpast I laid me down again. "To arms! To arms!" once more resounded, and again I started up. Never could I rest. I thought I had my armor on, and moved about perpetually clad in mail, rushing each hour to the castle top, aroused by some fresh alarm. At one time a foe was coming from the west, at another, from the east. I thought I had a treasure somewhere down in some deep part of the castle, and all my care was to guard it. I dreaded, I feared, I trembled lest it should be taken from me. I awoke, and I thought I would not live in such a tower as that for all its grandeur. It was the castle of discontent, the castle of ambition, in which man never rests. It is ever, "To arms! To arms! To arms!" There is a foe here, or a foe there. His dear-loved treasure must be guarded. Sleep never crossed the

drawbridge of the castle of discontent. Then I thought I would supplement it by another reverie. I was in a cottage. It was in what poets call a beautiful and pleasant place, but I cared not for that. I had no treasure in the world, save one sparkling jewel on my breast; and I thought I put my hand on that and went to sleep, nor did I wake till morning light. That treasure was a quiet conscience and the love of God—"the peace that passeth all understanding." I slept, because I slept in the house of content, satisfied with what I had. Go ye, overreaching misers! Go ye, grasping, ambitious men! I envy not your life of inquietude. The sleep of statesmen is often broken; the dream of the miser is always evil; the sleep of the man who loves gain is never hearty; but God "giveth," by contentment, "his beloved sleep."

IV. Once more; God giveth his beloved the *sleep of quietness* of soul as to the future. O, that dark future! that future! that future! The present may be well; but ah! the next wind may wither all the flowers, and where shall I be? Clutch thy gold, miser; for riches "make to themselves wings and flee away." Hug that babe to thy breast, mother, for the rough hand of death may rob thee of it. Look at thy fame, and wonder at it, O thou man of ambition! But one slight report shall wound thee to the heart, and thou shalt sink as low as ever thou hast been lifted high by the voices of the multitude. The future! All persons have need to dread the future, except the Christian. God giveth to his beloved a happy sleep with regard to the events of the coming time.

> "What may be my future lot,
> High or low, concerns me not;
> This doth set my heart at rest:
> What my God appoints is best."

Whether I am to live or die is no matter to me; whether I am to be "the offscouring of all things," or "the man whom the king delighteth to honor," matters not to me. All is alike, provided my Father doth but give it. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." How many of you have arrived at that happy point that you have no wish of your own at all? It is a sweet thing to have but one wish; but it is a better thing to have

no wish at all—to be all lost in the present enjoyment of Christ and the future anticipation of the vision of his face. O my soul! what would the future be to thee, if thou hadst not Christ? If it be a bitter and a dark future, what matters it, so long as Christ thy Lord sanctifies it, and the Holy Ghost still gives thee courage, energy, and strength? It is a blessed thing to be able to say with Madame Guyon,

"To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees.
One good she covets and that good alone,
To choose thy will, from selfish bias free,
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee
That we should bear the cross is thy command—
Die to the world, and live to sin no more;
Suffer unmoved beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwrecked, as when safe on shore."

It is a happy condition to attain. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Ah! if you have self-will in your hearts, pray to God to uproot it. Have you self-love? Beseech the Holy Spirit to turn it out; for if you will always will to do as God wills, you must be happy. I have heard of some good old woman in a cottage, who had nothing but a piece of bread and a little water; and lifting up her hands, she said, as a blessing, "What! all this, and Christ too?" It is "*all this*," compared with what we deserve. And I have read of some one dying, who was asked if he wished to live or die; and he said, "I have no wish at all about it." "But if you might wish, which would you choose?" "I would not choose at all." "But if God bade you choose?" "I would beg God to choose for me, for I should not know which to take." Happy state! happy state! to be perfectly acquiescent—

"To lie passive in his hand,
And know no will but his."

"So he giveth his beloved sleep."

V. In the fifth place: there is the *sleep of security*. Solomon slept with armed men round his bed, and thus slumbered

securely; but Solomon's father slept one night on the bare ground—not in a palace—with no moat round his castle wall; but he slept quite as safely as his son, for he said, "I laid me down and slept, and I awaked, for the Lord sustained me." Now, some persons never feel secure in this world at all; I query whether one half of my hearers feel themselves so Suppose I burst out in a moment, and sing this:

"I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
Are the glorified spirits in heaven."

You would say, that is too high doctrine; and I would reply, very likely it is for you, but it is the truth of God, and it is sweet doctrine for me. I love to know, that if I am predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, I must be saved; if I was purchased by the Son's blood, I can not be lost, for it would be impossible for Jesus Christ to lose one whom he has redeemed, otherwise he would be dissatisfied with his labors. I know that where he has begun the good work he will carry it on. I never fear that I shall fall away or be lost; my only fear is, lest I should not have been right at first; but, provided I am right, if I be really a child of God, I might believe that the sun would be smitten with madness, and go reeling through the universe like a drunken man; I might believe that the stars would run from their courses, and instead of marching with their measured tramp, as now they do, whirl on in wild courses like the dance of bacchanals; I could even conceive that this great universe might all subside in God, "even as a moment's foam subsides again upon the wave that bears it;" but neither reason, heresy, logic, eloquence, nor a conclave of divines, shall make me pay a moment's attention to the vile suggestion, that a child of God may ever perish. Hence I tread this earth with confidence Arguing a little while ago with an Arminian, he said, "Sir you ought to be a happy man; for if what you say be true, why you are as secure of being in heaven as if you were there." I said, "Yes, I know it." "Then you ought to live above cares and tribulations, and sing happily from morning to night."

I said, "So I ought, and so I will, God helping me." This is security. "He giveth his beloved sleep." To know that if I died I should enter heaven; to be as sure as I am of my own existence that God, having loved me with an everlasting love, and he being immutable, will never hate me if he has once loved me; to know that I must enter the kingdom of glory—is not this enough to make all burdens light, and give me the hind's feet wherewith I may stand upon my high places. Happy state of security! "So he giveth his beloved sleep."

And there is a sleep, my dear friends, of security, which is enjoyed on earth even in the midst of the greatest troubles. Do you remember that passage in the book of Ezekiel, where it is said, "They shall dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods?" A queer place to sleep in! "In the woods." There is a wolf over yonder; there is a tiger in a jungle; an eagle is soaring in the air; a horde of robbers dwell in the dark forest. "Never mind," says the child of God,

> "He that hath made his refuge God,
> Shall find a most secure abode;
> Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
> And there at night shall rest his head."

I have often admired Martin Luther, and wondered at his composure. When all men spoke so ill of him, what did he say? Turn to that Psalm—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." In a far inferior manner I have been called upon to stand up in the position of Martin Luther, and have been made the butt of slander, a mark for laughter and scorn; but it has not broken my spirit, nor will it yet while I am enabled to enjoy that quiescent state of, "So he giveth his beloved sleep." But thus far I beg to inform all those who choose to slander or speak ill of me, that they are very welcome to do so till they are tired of it. My motto is—*Cedo nulli*—I yield to none. I have not courted any man's love; I asked no man to attend my ministry; I preach what I like, and when I like, and as I like. Oh! happy

state, to be bold, though downcast and distressed—to go and bend my knee and tell my Father all, and then to come down from my chamber and say—

"If on my face for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be;
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
For thou'lt remember me."

VI. The last sleep God giveth his beloved is the *sleep of a happy dismission.* I have stood by the graves of many servants of the Lord. I have buried some of the excellent of the earth; and when I bid farewell to my brother down below there, slumbering in his coffin, I usually commence my speech with those words, "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Dear servants of Jesus! there I see them! What can I say of them, but that "so he giveth his beloved sleep?" Oh! happy sleep! This world is a state of tossing to and fro; but in that grave they rest. No sorrows there, no sighs, no groans, to mingle with the songs that warble from immortal tongues. Well may I address the dead thus: "My brother, oftentimes hast thou fought the battles of this world; thou hast had thy cares, thy trials, and thy troubles; but now thou art gone, not to worlds unknown, but to yonder land of light and glory. Sleep on, brother! Thy soul sleepeth not, for thou art in heaven; but thy body sleepeth. Death hath laid thee in thy last couch; it may be cold, but it is sanctified; it may be damp, but it is safe; and on the resurrection morning, when the archangel shall set his trumpet to his mouth, thou shalt rise. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.' Sleep on in thy grave, my brother, for thou shalt rise to glory. 'So he giveth his beloved sleep.'"

Some of you fear to die, and have good reason to do so, for death for you would be the beginning of sorrows, and on its approach ye might hear the voice of the angel of the Apocalypse, "One woe is past, but behold two woes more are to come." If, sirs, ye were to die unprepared, and unconverted, and unsaved, "there remaineth nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation." I need not

speak like a Boanerges, for it is to you a well-known truth, that without God, without Christ, "strangers from the commonwealth of Israel," your portion must be among the damned—the fiends—the tortured—the shrieking ghosts—the wandering souls who find no rest—

> "On waves of burning brimstone tossed
> Forever, oh! forever lost!"

"The wrath to come!" "The wrath to come!" "The wrath to come!"

But, beloved Christian brother, wherefore dost thou fear to die? Come! let me take thy hand!

> "To you and me by grace 'tis given
> To know the Saviour's precious name;
> And shortly we shall meet in heaven,
> Our end, our hope, our way, the same."

Do you know that heaven is just across that narrow stream? Are you afraid to plunge in and swim across? Do you fear to be drowned? I feel the bottom: it is good. Dost thou think thou shalt sink? Hear the voice of the Spirit! "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God: when thou passest through the river, I will be with thee, and the floods shall not overflow thee." Death is the gate of endless joy; and dost thou dread to enter there? What! fear to be emancipated from corruption? Oh! say not so; but rather gladly lay down and sleep in Jesus, and be blessed.

I have finished expounding my subject. There is only one question I want to ask of you before you pass out of those doors. Do you seriously and solemnly believe that you belong to the "beloved" here mentioned? I may be impertinent in asking such a question; I have been accused of that before now, but I have never denied it. I rather take the credit of it than not. But, seriously and solemnly, I ask you, Do you know yourselves to be among the beloved? And if it happens that you want a test, allow me to give you three tests very briefly, and I have done. It has been said that there are three kinds of preachers—doctrinal preachers, experimental preachers, and practical preachers. Now, I

think, there are three things that make up a Christian—true doctrine, real experience, and good practice.

Now, then, as to your doctrine. You may tell whether you are the Lord's beloved partly by that. Some think it matters not what a man believes. Excuse me: truth is always precious, and the least atom of truth is worth searching out. Now-a-days the sects do not clash so much as they did. Perhaps that is good; but there is one evil about it. People do not read their Bibles so much as they did. They think we are all right. Now, I believe we may be all right *in the main;* but we can not be all right where we contradict one another, and it becomes every man to search the Bible to see which is right. I am not afraid to submit my Calvinism, or my doctrine of believer's baptism, to the searching of the Bible. A learned lord, an infidel, once said to Whitefield, "Sir, I am an infidel, I do not believe the Bible, but if the Bible be true *you* are right, and your Arminian opponents are wrong. If the Bible be the word of God, the doctrines of grace are true;" adding, that if any man would grant him the Bible to be the truth, he would challenge him to disprove Calvinism. The doctrines of original sin, election, effectual calling, final perseverance, and all those great truths which are called Calvinism—though Calvin was not the author of them, but simply an able writer and preacher upon the subject—are, I believe, the essential doctrines of the gospel that is in Jesus Christ. Now, I do not ask you whether you believe all this—it is possible you may not; but I believe you will before you enter heaven. I am persuaded, that as God may have washed your hearts, he will wash your brains before you enter heaven. He will make you right in your doctrines. But I must inquire whether you read your Bibles. I am not finding fault with you, this morning, for differing from me; I may be wrong; but I want to know whether you search the Scriptures, to find what is truth. And, if you are not a reader of the Bible, if you take doctrines second-hand, if you go to chapel, and say, "I do not like that:" what matters your not liking it, provided it is in the Bible? Is it biblical truth, or is it not? If it is God's truth, let us have it exalted. It may not suit you; but let me remind you, that the truth that is in

Jesus never was palatable to carnal men, and, I believe, never will be. The reason you love it not, is because it cuts too much at your pride; it lets you down too low. Search yourselves, then, in doctrine.

Then take care that you remember the experimental test. I am afraid there is very little experimental religion among us; but where there is true doctrine, there ought always to be a vital experience. Sirs, try yourselves by the experimental test. Have you ever had an experience of your wretchedness, of your depravity, your inability, your death in sin? Have you ever felt life in Christ, an experience of the light of God's countenance, of wrestling with corruption? Have you had a grace-given, Holy Ghost-implanted experience of a communion with Christ? If so, then you are right on the experimental test.

And, to conclude, take care of the practical test. "Faith without works is dead, being alone." He that walketh in sin is a child of the devil; and he that walketh in righteousness is a child of light. Do not think, because you believe the right doctrines, therefore you are right. There are many that believe right, who act wrong; and they perish. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I have done. Now, let me beseech you, by the frailty of your own lives; by the shortness of time; by the dreadful realities of eternity; by the sins you have committed; by the pardon that you need; by the blood and wounds of Jesus; by his second coming to judge the world in righteousness; by the glories of heaven; by the awful horrors of hell; by time; by eternity; by all that is good; by all that is sacred;—let me beg of you, as you love your own souls, to search and see whether you are among the beloved, to whom he giveth sleep. God bless you.

SERMON IV.

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF.

'And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."—2 KINGS, vii. 19.

ONE wise man may deliver a whole city; one good man may be the means of safety to a thousand others. The holy ones are "the salt of the earth," the means of the preservation of the wicked. Without the godly as a conserve, the race would be utterly destroyed. In the city of Samaria there was one righteous man—Elisha, the servant of the Lord. Piety was altogether extinct in the court. The king was a sinner of the blackest dye; his iniquity was glaring and infamous. Jehoram walked in the ways of his father Ahab, and made unto himself false gods. The people of Samaria were fallen like their monarch; they had gone astray from Jehovah; they had forsaken the God of Israel; they remembered not the watchword of Jacob, "The Lord thy God is one God;" and in wicked idolatry they bowed before the idols of the heathens, and therefore the Lord of Hosts suffered their enemies to oppress them until the curse of Ebal was fulfilled in the streets of Samaria, for "the tender and delicate woman who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness" had an evil eye to her own children, and devoured her offspring by reason of fierce hunger. (Deuteronomy, xxviii. 56–58.) In this awful extremity the one holy man was the medium of salvation. The one grain of salt preserved the entire city; the one warrior for God was the means of the deliverance of the whole beleaguered multitude. For Elisha's sake, the Lord

sent the promise, that the next day, food, which could not be obtained at any price, should be had at the cheapest possible rate, at the very gates of Samaria. We may picture the joy of the multitude when first the seer uttered this prediction. They knew him to be a prophet of the Lord; he had divine credentials; all his past prophecies had been fulfilled. They knew that he was a man sent of God, and uttering Jehovah's message. Surely the monarch's eyes would glisten with delight, and the emaciated multitude would leap for joy, at the prospect of so speedy a release from famine. "To-morrow," would they shout, "*to-morrow* our hunger shall be over, and we shall feast to the full!"

However, the lord on whom the king leaned, expressed his disbelief. We hear not that any of the common people, the plebeians, ever did so; but an aristocrat did it. Strange it is, that God has seldom chosen the great men of this world. High places and faith in Christ do seldom agree. This great man said, "Impossible!" and, with an insult to the prophet, he added, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be?" His sin lay in the fact, that after repeated seals of Elisha's ministry, he yet disbelieved the assurances uttered by the prophet on God's behalf. He had doubtless seen the marvelous defeat of Moab; he had been startled at tidings of the resurrection of the Shunamite's son; he knew that Elisha had revealed Benhadad's secrets and smitten his marauding hosts with blindness; he had seen the bands of Syria decoyed into the heart of Samaria; and he probably knew the story of the widow, whose oil filled all the vessels, and redeemed her sons; at all events, the cure of Naaman was common conversation at court; and yet, in the face of all this accumulated evidence, in the teeth of all these credentials of the prophet's mission, he yet doubted, and insultingly told him that heaven must become an open casement, ere the promise could be performed. Whereupon God pronounced his doom by the mouth of the man who had just now proclaimed the promise, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." And Providence—which always fulfills prophecy just as the paper takes the stamp of the type—destroyed the man. Trodden down in the streets of Samaria, he per-

ished at its gates, beholding the plenty, but tasting not of it. Perhaps his carriage was haughty, and insulting to the people, or he tried to restrain their eager rush; or, as we would say, it might have been by mere accident that he was crushed to death; so that he saw the prophecy fulfilled, but never lived to enjoy it. In his case, seeing was believing, but it was not enjoying.

I shall this morning invite your attention to two things—the man's *sin* and his *punishment*. Perhaps I shall say but little of this man, since I have detailed the circumstances, but I shall discourse upon the sin of unbelief and the punishment thereof.

1. And first, the *sin*. His sin was *unbelief*. He doubted the promise of God. In this particular case unbelief took the form of a doubt of the divine veracity, or a mistrust of God's power. Either he doubted whether God really meant what he said, or whether it was within the range of possibility that God should fulfill his promise. Unbelief hath more phases than the moon, and more colors than the chameleon. Common people say of the devil, that he is seen sometimes in one shape, and sometimes in another. I am sure this is true of Satan's first-born child, unbelief, for its forms are legion. At one time I see unbelief dressed out as an angel of light. It calls itself humility, and it saith, "I would not be presumptuous; I dare not think that God would pardon me; I am too great a sinner." We call that humility, and thank God that our friend is in so good a condition. I do not thank God for any such delusion. It is the devil dressed as an angel of light; it is unbelief after all. At other times we detect unbelief in the shape of a doubt of God's immutability: "The Lord has loved me, but perhaps he will cast me off to-morrow. He helped me yesterday, and under the shadow of his wings I trust; but perhaps I shall receive no help in the next affliction. He may have cast me off; he may be unmindful of his covenant, and forget to be gracious." Sometimes this infidelity is embodied in a doubt of God's power. We see every day new straits; we are involved in a net of difficulties, and we think, "Surely the Lord can not deliver us." We strive to get rid of our burden, and finding that we can not do it, we

think God's arm is as short as ours, and his power as little as human might. A fearful form of unbelief is that doubt which keeps men from coming to Christ; which leads the sinner to distrust the ability of Christ to save him; to doubt the willingness of Jesus to accept so great a transgressor. But the most hideous of all is the traitor, in its true colors, blaspheming God, and madly denying his existence. Infidelity, deism, and atheism, are the ripe fruits of this pernicious tree; they are the most terrific eruptions of the volcano of unbelief. Unbelief hath become of a full stature, when quitting the mask and laying aside disguise, it profanely stalks the earth, uttering the rebellious cry, "No God," striving in vain to shake the throne of the divinity by lifting up its arm against Jehovah, and in its arrogance would

> "Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
> Re-judge his justice—be the god of God."

Then truly unbelief has come to its full perfection; and then you see what it really is; for the least unbelief is of the same nature as the greatest.

I am astonished, and I am sure you will be, when I tell you that there are some strange people in the world who do not believe that unbelief is sin. Strange people I must call them, because they are sound in their faith in every other respect; only, to make the articles of their creed consistent, as they imagine, they deny that unbelief is sinful. I remember a young man going into a circle of friends and ministers, who were disputing whether it was a sin in men that they did not believe the gospel. While they were discussing it, he said, "Gentlemen, am I in the presence of Christians? Are you believers in the Bible, or are you not?" They said, "We are Christians, of course." "Then," said he, "does not the Scripture say, 'of sin, because they believed not on me?' And is it not the damning sin of sinners, that they do not believe on Christ?"

It could not have thought that persons should be so foolhardy as to venture to assert, that "it is no sin for a sinner not to believe on Christ." I thought that, however far they might wish to push their sentiments, they would not tell a lie

to uphold the truth; and, in my opinion, that is what such men are really doing. Truth is a strong tower, and never requires to be buttressed with error. God's word will stand against all man's devices. I would never invent a sophism to prove that it is no sin on the part of the ungodly not to believe; for I am sure it is, when I am taught in the Scriptures that, "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light;" and when I read, "he that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not on the Son of God." I affirm, and the word declares it, *unbelief is a sin.* Surely, with rational and unprejudiced persons, it can not require any reasoning to prove it. Is it not a sin for a creature to doubt the word of its Maker? Is it not a crime and an insult to the divinity, for me, an atom, a particle of dust, to dare to deny his words? Is it not the very summit of arrogance and extremity of pride, for a son of Adam to say, even in his heart, "God, I doubt thy grace; God, I doubt thy love; God, I doubt thy power?" Oh! sirs, believe me, could you roll all sins into one mass; could you take murder, and blasphemy, and lust, and adultery, and fornication, and every thing that is vile, and unite them all into one vast globe of black corruption, they would not equal even then the sin of unbelief. This is the monarch sin, the quintessence of guilt; the mixture of the venom of all crimes; the dregs of the wine of Gomorrah: it is the A 1 sin; the master-piece of Satan; the chief work of the devil.

I shall attempt this morning, for a little while, to show the extremely evil nature of the sin of unbelief.

And, first, the sin of unbelief will appear to be extremely hideous when we remember that *it is the parent of every other iniquity.* There is no crime which unbelief will not beget. I think that the fall of man is very much owing to it. It was in this point that the devil tempted Eve. He said to her, "Yea, *hath* God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" He whispered, and insinuated a doubt, "Yea, *hath* God said so?" as much as to say, "Are you *quite* sure he said so?" It was by means of unbelief—that thin part of the wedge—that the other sin entered; curiosity and the rest followed. She touched the fruit, and destruction came into this world.

Since that time, unbelief has been the prolific parent of all guilt. An unbeliever is capable of the vilest crime that ever was committed. Unbelief, sirs! why it hardened the heart of Pharaoh; it gave license to the tongue of blaspheming Rabshekah; yea, it became a deicide, and murdered Jesus. Unbelief!—it has sharpened the knife of the suicide; it has mixed many a cup of poison; thousands it has brought to the halter, and many to a shameful grave; who have murdered themselves, and rushed with bloody hands before their Creator's tribunal, because of unbelief. Give me an unbeliever; let me know that he doubts God's word; let me know that he distrusts his promise and his threatening; and with that for a premise, I will conclude that the man shall, by-and-by, unless there is amazing restraining power exerted upon him, be guilty of the foulest and blackest crimes. Ah! this is a Beelzebub sin: like Beelzebub, it is the leader of all evil spirits. It is said of Jeroboam, that he sinned, and made Israel to sin; and it may be said of unbelief, that it not only sins itself, but makes others sin. It is the egg of all crime, the seed of every offense; in fact, every thing that is evil and vile lies couched in that one word—unbelief.

And let me say here, that unbelief in the Christian is of the self-same nature as unbelief in the sinner. It is not the same in its final issue, for it will be pardoned in the Christian; yea it is pardoned. It was laid upon the scape-goat's head of old; it was blotted out and atoned for; but it is of the same sinful nature. In fact, if there can be one sin more heinous than the unbelief of a sinner, it is the unbelief of a saint. For a saint to doubt God's word; for a saint to distrust God, after innumerable instances of his love, after ten thousand proofs of his mercy, exceeds every thing. In a saint, moreover, unbelief is the root of other sins. When I am perfect in faith, I shall be perfect in every thing else. I should always fulfill the precept, if I always believed the promise. But it is because my faith is weak that I sin. Put me in trouble, and if I can fold my arms, and say, "Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide," you will not find me using wrong means to escape from it. But let me be in temporal distress and difficulty; if I distrust God, what then? Perhaps I shall steal or do a dishonest act to

get out of the hands of my creditors; or if kept from such a transgression, I may plunge into excess to drown my anxieties. Once take away faith, the reins are broken; and who can ride an unbroken steed without rein or bridle? Like the chariot of the sun, with Phæton for its driver, such should we be without faith. Unbelief is the mother of vice; it is the parent of sin; and, therefore, I say it is a pestilent evil, a master sin.

2. But secondly; *unbelief not only begets, but fosters sin* How is it that men can keep their sin under the thunders of the Sinai preacher? How is it that when Boanerges stands in the pulpit, and, by the grace of God, cries aloud, "Cursed is every man that keepeth not all the commands of the law;" how is it that when the sinner hears the tremendous threatenings of God's justice, still he is hardened, and walks on in his evil ways? I will tell you: it is because unbelief of that threatening prevents it from having any effect upon him. When our sappers and miners went to work around Sebastopol, they could not work in front of the walls, if they had not something to keep off the shots; so they raised earth-works, behind which they could do what they pleased. So with the ungodly man. The devil gives him unbelief: he thus puts up an earth-work, and finds refuge behind it. Ah, sinners! when once the Holy Ghost knocks down your unbelief; when once he brings home the truth in demonstration and in power, how the law will work upon your soul. If man did but believe that the law is holy, that the commandments are holy, just, and good, how he would be shaken over hell's mouth; there would be no sitting and sleeping in God's house; no careless hearers; no going away and straightway forgetting what manner of men ye are. Oh! once get rid of unbelief, how would every ball from the batteries of the law fall upon the sinner; and the slain of the Lord would be many. Again; how is it that men can hear the wooings of the cross of Calvary and yet not come to Christ? How is it that when we preach about the sufferings of Jesus, and close up by saying, "yet there is room;" how is it that when we dwell upon his cross and passion men are not broken in their hearts? It is said,

"Law and terrors do but harden.
All the while they work alone:
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Will dissolve a heart of stone."

Methinks the tale of Calvary is enough to break a rock. Rocks did rend when they saw Jesus die. Methinks the tragedy of Golgotha is enough to make a flint gush with tears, and to make the most hardened wretch weep out his eyes in drops of penitential love; but yet we tell it you, and repeat it oft, but who weeps over it? Who cares about it? Sirs, you sit as unconcerned as if it did not signify to you. Oh! behold and see, all ye that pass by. Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die? You seem to say, "It is nothing." What is the reason? Because there is unbelief between you and the cross. If there were not that thick vail between you and the Saviour's eyes, his looks of love would melt you. But unbelief is the sin which keeps the power of the gospel from working in the sinner; and it is not until the Holy Ghost strikes that unbelief out; it is not till the Holy Spirit rends away that infidelity, and takes it altogether down, that we can find the sinner coming to put his trust in Jesus.

3. But there is a third point. *Unbelief disables a man for the performance of any good work.* "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," is a great truth in more senses than one. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." You shall never hear me say a word against morality; you shall never hear me say that honesty is not a good thing, or that sobriety is not a good thing; on the contrary, I would say, they are commendable things; but I will tell you what I will say afterward: I will tell you that they are just like the cowries of Hindoostan: they may pass current among the Indians, but they will not do in England. These virtues may be current here below, but not above. If you have not something better than your own goodness, you will never get to heaven. Some of the Indian tribes use little strips of cloth instead of money; and I would not find fault with them if I lived there; but when I come to England, strips of cloth will not suffice. So honesty, sobriety, and such things may be very good among men, and the more you have of them the better. I

exhort you, whatsoever things are lovely, and pure, and of good report, have them; but they will not do up there. All these things put together, without faith, do not please God. Virtues without faith, are whitewashed sins; obedience without faith, if it is possible, is a gilded disobedience. Not to believe nullifies every thing. It is the fly in the ointment, it is the poison in the pot. Without faith, with all the virtues of purity, with all the benevolence of philanthropy, with all the kindness of disinterested sympathy, with all the talents of genius, with all the bravery of patriotism, and with all the decision of principle—"without faith it is impossible to please God." Do you not see, then, how bad unbelief is, because it prevents men from performing good works. Yea, even in Christians themselves, unbelief disables them. Let me just tell you a tale—a story of Christ's life:

A certain man had an afflicted son, possessed with an evil spirit. Jesus was up in Mount Tabor, transfigured; so the father brought his son to the disciples. What did the disciples do? They said, "Oh, we will cast him out." They put their hands upon him, and they tried to do it; but they whispered among themselves, and said, "We are afraid we shall not be able." By-and-by the diseased man began to froth at the mouth; he foamed and scratched the earth, clasping it in his paroxysms. The demoniac spirit within him was alive. The devil was still there. In vain their repeated exorcism; the evil spirit remained like a lion in his den, nor could their efforts dislodge him. "Go!" said they; but he went not. "Away to the pit!" they cried; but he remained immovable. The lips of unbelief can not affright the Evil One, who might well have said, "Faith I know, Jesus I know, but who are you? you have no faith." If they had had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, they might have cast the devil out; but their faith was gone, and therefore they could do nothing. Look at poor Peter's case, too. While he had faith, Peter walked on the waves of the sea. That was a splendid walk; I almost envy him treading upon the billows. Why, if Peter's faith had continued, he might have walked across the Atlantic to America. But presently there came a billow behind him, and he said, "That will sweep me away;" and then another

before, and he cried out, "That will overwhelm me;" and he thought—how could I be so presumptuous as to be walking on the top of these waves? Down goes Peter. Faith was Peter's life-buoy; faith was Peter's charm—it kept him up; but unbelief sent him down. Do you know that you and I, all our lifetime, will have to walk on the water? A Christian's life is always walking on water—mine is—and every wave would swallow and devour him, but faith makes him stand. The moment you cease to believe, that moment distress comes in, and down you go. Oh! wherefore dost thou doubt, then?

Faith fosters every virtue; unbelief murders every one. Thousands of prayers have been strangled in their infancy by unbelief. Unbelief has been guilty of infanticide: it has murdered many an infant petition; many a song of praise that would have swelled the chorus of the skies, has been stifled by an unbelieving murmur; many a noble enterprise conceived in the heart has been blighted ere it could come forth, by unbelief. Many a man would have been a missionary; would have stood and preached his Master's gospel boldly; but he had unbelief. Once make a giant unbelieving, and he becomes a dwarf. Faith is the Samsonian lock of the Christian; cut it off, and you may put out his eyes—and he can do nothing.

4. Our next remark is—*unbelief has been severely punished.* Turn you to the Scriptures! I see a world all fair and beautiful; its mountains laughing in the sun, and the fields rejoicing in the golden light. I see maidens dancing, and young men singing. How fair the vision! But lo! a grave and reverend sire lifts up his hand, and cries, "A flood is coming to deluge the earth: the fountains of the great deep will be broken up, and all things will be covered. See yonder ark! One hundred and twenty years have I toiled with these mine hands to build it; flee there, and you are safe." "Aha! old man; away with your empty predictions! Aha! let us be happy while we may! when the flood comes, then we will build an ark; but there is no flood coming; tell that to fools; we believe no such things." See the unbelievers pursue their merry dance. Hark! unbeliever. Dost thou not hear that

rumbling noise? Earth's bowels have begun to move, her rocky ribs are strained by dire convulsions from within; lo! they break with the enormous strain, and forth from between them torrents rush unknown since God concealed them in the bosom of our world. Heaven is split in sunder! it rains. Not drops, but clouds descend. A cataract, like that of old Niagara, rolls from heaven with mighty noise. Both firmaments, both deeps—the deep below and the deep above—do clasp their hands. Now, unbelievers, where are you now? There is your last remnant. A man—his wife clasping him round the waist—stands on the last summit that is above the water. See him there! The water is up to his loins even now. Hear his last shriek! he is floating—he is drowned. And as Noah looks from the ark, he sees nothing. Nothing! It is a void profound. "Sea-monsters whelp and stable in the palaces of kings." All is overthrown, covered, drowned. What hath done it? What brought the flood upon the earth? Unbelief. By faith Noah escaped from the flood. By unbelief the rest were drowned.

And, oh! do you not know that unbelief kept Moses and Aaron out of Canaan? They honored not God; they struck the rock when they ought to have spoken to it. They disbelieved; and therefore the punishment came upon them, that they should not inherit that good land, for which they had toiled and labored.

Let me take you where Moses and Aaron dwelt—to the vast and howling wilderness. We will walk about it for a time; sons of the weary foot, we will become like the wandering Bedouins, we will tread the desert for a while. There lies a carcase whitened in the sun; there another, and there another. What mean these bleached bones? What are these bodies—there a man, and there a woman? What are all these? How came these corpses here? Surely some grand encampment must have been here cut off in a single night by a blast, or by bloodshed. Ah! no, no. Those bones are the bones of Israel; those skeletons are the old tribes of Jacob. They could not enter because of unbelief. They trusted not in God. Spies said that they could not conquer the land. Unbelief was the cause of their death. It was not

the Anakim that destroyed Israel; it was not the howling wilderness which devoured them; it was not the Jordan which proved a barrier to Canaan; neither Hivite nor Jebusite slew them; it was unbelief alone which kept them out of Canaan. What a doom to be pronounced on Israel, after forty years of journeying: they could not enter because of unbelief!

Not to multiply instances, recollect Zechariah. He doubted, and the angel struck him dumb. His mouth was closed because of unbelief. But, oh! if you would have the worst picture of the effects of unbelief—if you would see how God has punished it, I must take you to the siege of Jerusalem, that worst massacre which time has ever seen; when the Romans razed the walls to the ground, and put the whole of the inhabitants to the sword, or sold them as slaves in the marketplace. Have you never read of the destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus? Did you never turn to the tragedy of Masada, when the Jews stabbed each other rather than fall into the hands of the Romans? Do you not know, that to this day the Jew walks through the earth a wanderer, without a home and without a land? He is cut off, as a branch is cut from a vine; and why? Because of unbelief. Each time you see a Jew with a sad and somber countenance—each time you mark him like a denizen of another land, treading as an exile this our country—each time you see him, pause and say, "Ah! it was unbelief which caused thee to murder Christ, and now it has driven thee to be a wanderer; and faith alone —faith in the crucified Nazarene—can fetch thee back to thy country, and restore it to its ancient grandeur." Unbelief, you see, has the Cain-mark upon its forehead. God hates it; God has dealt hard blows upon it; and God will ultimately crush it. Unbelief dishonors God. Every other crime touches God's territory; but unbelief aims a blow at his divinity, impeaches his veracity, denies his goodness, blasphemes his attributes, maligns his character; therefore, God, of all things, hates first and chiefly, unbelief, wherever it is.

5. And now to close this point—for I have already been too long—let me remark that you will observe the heinous nature of unbelief in this—that *it is the damning sin.* There is one sin for which Christ never died; it is the sin against the Holy

Ghost. There is one other sin for which Christ never made atonement. Mention every crime in the calendar of evil, and I will show you persons who have found forgiveness for it. But ask me whether the man who died in unbelief can be saved, and I reply, there is no atonement for that man. There is an atonement made for the unbelief of a Christian, because it is temporary; but the final unbelief—the unbelief with which men die—never was atoned for. You may turn over this whole book, and you will find that there is no atonement for the man who died in unbelief; there is no mercy for him. Had he been guilty of every other sin, if he had but believed, he would have been pardoned; but this is the damning exception—he had no faith. Devils seize him! O fiends of the pit, drag him downward to his doom! He is faithless and unbelieving, and such are the tenants for whom hell was built. It is *their* portion, *their* prison, they are the chief prisoners, the fetters are marked with their names, and forever shall they know that "he that believeth not shall be damned."

II. This brings us now to conclude with the punishment. "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." Listen, unbelievers! you have heard this morning your sin; now listen to your doom: "You shall see it with your eyes, but shall not eat thereof." It is so often with God's own saints. When they are unbelieving, they see the mercy with their eyes, but do not eat it. Now, here is corn in this land of Egypt; but there are some of God's saints who come here on the Sabbath, and say, "I do not know whether the Lord will be with me or not." Some of them say, "Well, the gospel is preached, but I do not know whether it will be successful." They are always doubting and fearing. Listen to them when they get out of the chapel. "Well, did you get a good meal this morning?" "Nothing for me." Of course not. You could see it with your eyes, but did not eat it, because you had no faith. If you had come up with faith, you would have had a morsel. I have found Christians, who have grown up so very critical, that if the whole portion of the meat they are to have, in due season, is not cut up exactly into square pieces, and put upon some choice dish of porcelain, they can not eat it. Then they ought to go with

out; and they will have to go without, until they are brought to their appetites. They will have some affliction, which will act like quinine upon them; they will be made to eat by means of bitters in their mouths; they will be put in prison for a day or two until their appetite returns, and then they will be glad to eat the most ordinary food, off the most common platter, or no platter at all. But the real reason why God's people do not feed under a gospel ministry, is, because they have not faith. If you believed, if you did but hear one promise, that would be enough; if you only heard one good thing from the pulpit, here would be food for your soul, for it is not the quantity we hear, but the quantity we believe, that does us good—it is that which we receive into our hearts with true and lively faith, that is our profit.

But, let me apply this chiefly to the unconverted. They often see great works of God done with their eyes, but they do not eat thereof. A crowd of people have come here this morning to see with their eyes, but I doubt whether all of them eat. Men can not eat with their eyes, for if they could, most would be well fed. And, spiritually, persons can not feed simply with their ears, nor simply with looking at the preacher; and so we find the majority of our congregations come just to see: "Ah, let us hear what this babbler would say, this reed shaken in the wind." But they have no faith; they come, and they see, and see, and see, and never eat. There is some one in the front there, who gets converted; and some one down below, who is called by sovereign grace; some poor sinner is weeping under a sense of his blood-guiltiness; another is crying for mercy to God; and another is saying, "Have mercy upon me, a sinner." A great work is going on in this chapel, but some of you do not know any thing about it; you have no work going on in your hearts, and why? Because you think it is impossible; you think God is not at work. He has not promised to work for you who do not honor him. Unbelief makes you sit here in times of revival, and of the outpouring of God's grace, unmoved, uncalled, unsaved.

But, sirs, the worst fulfillment of this doom is to come! Good Whitefield used sometimes to lift up both his hands and

shout, as I wish I could shout, but my voice fails me: "The wrath to come! the wrath to come!" It is not the wrath now you have to fear, but the wrath to come; and there shall be a doom to come, when "you shall see it with your eyes, but shall not eat thereof." Methinks I see the last great day. The last hour of time has struck. I heard the bell toll its death-knell—time was, eternity is ushered in; the sea is boiling; the waves are lit up with supernatural splendor. I see a rainbow—a flying cloud, and on it there is a throne, and on that throne sits one like unto the Son of Man. I know him. In his hand he holds a pair of balances; just before him the books—the book of life, the book of death, the book of remembrance. I see his splendor, and I rejoice at it; I behold his pompous appearance, and I smile with gladness that he is come to be "admired of all his saints." But there stand a throng of miserable wretches, crouching in horror to conceal themselves, and yet looking, for their eyes must look on him whom they have pierced; but when they look they cry, "Hide me from the face." What face? "Rocks, hide me from the face." What face? "The face of Jesus, the man who died, but now is come to judgment." But you can not be hidden from his face; you must see it with your eyes; but you will not sit on the right hand, dressed in robes of grandeur; and when the triumphal procession of Jesus in the clouds shall come, you shall not march in it; you shall see it, but you shall not be there. Oh! methinks I see it now, the mighty Saviour in his chariot, riding on the rainbow to heaven. See how his mighty coursers make the sky rattle while he drives them up heaven's hill. A train girt in white follow behind him, and at his chariot wheels he drags the devil, death, and hell. Hark, how they clap their hands. Hark, how they shout: "Thou hast ascended up on high; thou hast led captivity captive." Hark, how they chant the solemn lay, "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." See the splendor of their appearance; mark the crowns upon their brows; see their snow white garments; mark the rapture of their countenances hear how their song swells up to heaven while the Eternal joins therein, saying, "I will rejoice over them with joy, I will rejoice over them with singing, for I have betrothed thee

unto me in everlasting loving-kindness." But where are you all the while? You can see them up there, but where are you? Looking at it with your eyes, but you can not eat thereof. The marriage banquet is spread; the good old wines of eternity are broached; they sit down to the feast of the King; but there are you, miserable, and famishing, and you can not eat thereof. Oh! how you wring your hands. Might you but have one morsel from that table—might you but be dogs beneath the table. You shall be a dog in hell, but not a dog in heaven.

But to conclude. Methinks I see thee in some place in hell, tied to a rock, the vulture of remorse gnawing thy heart; and up there is Lazarus in Abraham's breast. You lift up your eye and you see who it is: "That is the poor man who lay on my dunghill, and the dogs licked his sores; there he is in heaven, while I am cast down. Lazarus—yes, it is Lazarus; and I who was rich in the world of time am here in hell. Father Abraham, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue." But no! it can not be it can not be. And while you lie there, if there be one thing in hell worse than another, it will be seeing the saints in heaven. Oh, to think of seeing my mother in heaven, while I am cast out! Oh, sinner, only think, to see thy brother in heaven—he who was rocked in the selfsame cradle, and played beneath the same roof-tree—yet thou art cast out. And, husband, there is thy wife in heaven, and thou art among the damned. And seest thou, father! thy child is before the throne; and thou! accursed of God and accursed of man, art in hell. Oh, the hell of hells will be to see our friends in heaven and ourselves lost. I beseech you, my hearers, by the death of Christ—by his agony and bloody sweat—by his cross and passion—by all that is holy—by all that is sacred in heaven and earth—by all that is solemn in time or eternity—by all that is horrible in hell, or glorious in heaven—by that awful thought, "forever"—I beseech you lay these things to heart, and remember that if you are damned, it will be unbelief that damns you. If you are lost, it will be because you believed not on Christ; and if you perish, this shall be the bitterest drop of gall—that you did not trust in the Saviour.

SERMON V.

ELECTION.

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."—2 THESSALONIANS, ii. 13, 14.

IF there were no other text in the sacred word except this one, I think we should all be bound to receive and acknowledge the truthfulness of the great and glorious doctrine of God's ancient choice of his family. But there seems to be an inveterate prejudice in the human mind against this doctrine, and although most other doctrines will be received by professing Christians, some with caution, others with pleasure, yet this one seems to be most frequently disregarded and discarded. In many of our pulpits, it would be reckoned a high sin and treason to preach a sermon upon *election*, because they could not make it what they call a "practical" discourse. I believe they have erred from the truth therein. Whatever God has revealed, he has revealed for a purpose. There is nothing in Scripture which may not, under the influence of God's Spirit, be turned into a practical discourse: for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" for some purpose of spiritual usefulness. It is true, it may not be turned into a free-will discourse—that we know right well—but it can be turned into a practical free-grace discourse; and free-grace practice is the best practice, when the true doctrines of God's immutable love are brought to bear upon the hearts of saints and sinners. Now, I trust this morning some of you who are startled at the very sound of this word, will say, "I will give

it a fair hearing, I will lay aside my prejudices; I will just hear what this man has to say." Do not shut your ears and say at once, "It is high doctrine." Who has authorized you to call it high or low? Why should you oppose yourself to God's doctrine? Remember what became of the children who found fault with God's prophet, and exclaimed, "Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head." Say nothing against God's doctrines, lest haply some evil beast should come out of the forest and devour you also. There are other woes beside the open judgment of heaven—take heed that these fall not on your head. Lay aside your prejudices; listen calmly, listen dispassionately: hear what Scripture says; and when you receive the truth, if God should be pleased to reveal and manifest it to your souls, do not be ashamed to confess it. To confess you were wrong yesterday, is only to acknowledge that you are a little wiser to-day; and instead of being a reflection on yourself, it is an honor to your judgment, and shows that you are improving in the knowledge of the truth. Do not be ashamed to learn, and to cast aside your old doctrines and views, but take up that which you may more plainly see to be in the word of God. But if you do not see it to be here in the Bible, whatever I may say, or whatever authorities I may plead, I beseech you as you love your souls, reject it; and if from this pulpit you ever hear things contrary to this sacred word, remember that the Bible must be the first, and God's minister must lie underneath it. We must not stand on the Bible to preach, but we must preach with the Bible above our heads. After all we have preached, we are well aware that the mountain of truth is higher than our eyes can discern; clouds and darkness are round about its summit, and we can not discern its topmost pinnacle; yet we will try to preach it as well as we can. But since we are mortal and liable to err, exercise your judgment; "try the spirits whether they are of God;" and if on mature reflection on your bended knees, you are led to disregard election—a thing which I consider to be utterly impossible—then forsake it, do not hear it preached, but believe and confess whatever you see to be God's word. I can say no more than that by way of ex ordium.

Now, first, I shall speak a little concerning the *truthfulness* of this doctrine: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Secondly, I shall try to prove that this election is *absolute:* "He hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," not *for* sanctification, but "*through* sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Thirdly, this election is *eternal;* because the text says, "God hath *from the beginning* chosen you." Fourthly, it is *personal:* "He hath chosen *you.*" Then we will look at *the effects* of the doctrine—see what it does; and lastly, as God may enable us, we will try and look at *its tendencies*, and see whether it is indeed a terrible and licentious doctrine. We will take the flower, and like true bees, see whether there be any honey whatever in it; whether any good can come of it, or whether it is an unmixed, undiluted evil.

I. First, I must try and prove that the doctrine is *true.* And let me begin with an *argumentum ad hominem:* I will speak to you according to your different positions and stations There are some of you who belong to the Church of England, and I am happy to see so many of you here. Though now and then I certainly say some very hard things about church and state, yet I love the old church, for she has in her communion many godly ministers and eminent saints. Now, I know you are great believers in what the Articles declare to be sound doctrine. I will give you a specimen of what they utter concerning *election*, so that if you believe them, you can not avoid receiving election. I will read a portion of the 17th article, upon Predestination and Election:

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk relig-

iously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity."

Now, I think any churchman, if he be a sincere and honest believer in mother church, must be a thorough believer in election. True, if he turns to certain other portions of the Prayer Book, he will find things contrary to the doctrines of free grace, and altogether apart from scriptural teaching; but if he looks at the Articles, he must see that God hath chosen his people unto eternal life. I am not so desperately enamored, however, of that book as you may be, and I have only used this article to show you, that if you belong to the Establishment of England, you should at least offer no objection to this doctrine of predestination.

Another human authority whereby I would confirm the doctrine of election, is, the old Waldensian creed. If you read the creed of the old Waldenses, emanating from them in the midst of the burning heat of persecution, you will see that these renowned professors and confessors of the Christian faith did most firmly receive and embrace this doctrine as being a portion of the truth of God. I have copied from an old book one of the articles of their faith:

"That God saves from corruption and damnation those whom he has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith, or holiness that he foresaw in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ Jesus his Son, passing by all the rest, according to the irreprehensible reason of his own free-will and justice."

It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching; no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, that are called by nickname Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me. Were I a Pelagian, or a believer in the doctrine of free-will, I should have to walk for centuries all alone. Here and there a heretic, of no very honorable character, might rise up and call me brother. But taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren

I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do, and acknowledge that this is the religion of God's own church.

I also give you an extract from the old Baptist confession. We are Baptists in this congregation—the greater part of us at any rate—and we like to see what our own forefathers wrote. Some two hundred years ago the Baptists assembled together, and published their articles of faith, to put an end to certain reports against their orthodoxy which had gone forth to the world. I turn to this old book—which I have just published, and which you will soon be able to have—and I find the following as the

3d Article: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sins to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it can not be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto."

As for these human authorities, I care not one rush for all three of them. I care not what they say, *pro* or *con.*, as to this doctrine. I have only used them as a kind of confirmation to your faith to show you that whilst I may be railed upon as a heretic and as a hyper-Calvinist, after all I am backed up by antiquity. All the past stands by me. I do not care for the present. Give me the past and I will hope for the future. Let the present rise up in my teeth; I will not care. What though a host of the churches of London may have forsaken the great cardinal doctrines of God, it matters not. If a handful of us stand alone in an unflinching maintenance of the sovereignty of our God, if we are beset by enemies, ay, and even by our own brethren, who ought to be our friends and helpers, it matters

not, if we can but count upon the past; the noble army of martyrs, the glorious host of confessors, are our friends; the witnesses of truth stand by us. With these for us, we will not say that we stand alone; but we may exclaim, "Lo, God hath reserved unto himself seven thousand that have not bowed the knee unto Baal!" But the best of all is, *God is with us.*

The great truth is always the Bible, and the Bible alone My hearers, you do not believe in any other book than the Bible, do you? If I could prove this from all the books in Christendom; if I could fetch back the Alexandrian library, and prove it thence, you would not believe it any more; but you surely will believe what is in God's word.

I have selected a few texts to read to you. I love to give you a whole volley of texts when I am afraid you will distrust a truth, so that you may be too astonished to doubt, if you do not in reality believe. Just let me run through a catalogue of passages where the people of God are called elect. Of course if the people are called *elect*, there must be *election*. If Jesus Christ and his apostles were accustomed to style believers by the title of elect, we must certainly believe that they were so, otherwise the term does not mean any thing. Jesus Christ says, "Except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the *elect's* sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the *elect*." "Then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his *elect* from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." (Mark, xiii. 20, 22, 27.) "Shall not God avenge his own *elect*, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" (Luke, xviii. 7.) Together with many other passages which might be selected, wherein either the word "elect," or "chosen," or "foreordained," or "appointed," is mentioned; or the phrase "my sheep," or some similar designation, showing that Christ's people are distinguished from the rest of mankind.

But you have concordances, and I will not trouble you with texts. Throughout the epistles, the saints are constantly

called "the elect." In the Colossians we find Paul saying, "Put on therefore, as the *elect* of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." When he writes to Titus, he calls himself, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's *elect*." Peter says, "*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Then if you turn to John, you will find he is very fond of the word. He says, "The elder to the *elect* lady;" and he speaks of our "*elect* sister." And we know where it is written, "The church that is at Babylon, *elected* together with you." They were not ashamed of the word in those days; they were not afraid to talk about it. Now-a-days the word has been dressed up with diversities of meaning, and persons have mutilated and marred the doctrine, so that they have made it a very doctrine of devils, I do confess; and many who call themselves believers, have gone to rank Antinomianism. But notwithstanding this, why should I be ashamed of it, if men do wrest it? We love God's truth on the rack, as well as when it is walking upright. If there were a martyr whom we loved before he came on the rack, we should love him more still when he was stretched there. When God's truth is stretched on the rack, we do not call it falsehood. We love not to see it racked, but we love it even when racked, because we can discern what its proper proportions ought to have been if it had not been racked and tortured by the cruelty and inventions of men. If you will read many of the epistles of the ancient Fathers, you will find them always writing to the people of God as "the elect." Indeed the common conversational term used among many of the churches by the primitive Christians to one another, was that of the "elect." They would often use the term to one another, showing that it was generally believed that all God's people were manifestly "elect."

But now for the verses that will positively prove the doctrine. Open your Bibles and turn to John, xv. 16, and there you will see that Jesus Christ has chosen his people; for he says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Then in the 19th

verse, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Then in the 17th chapter and the 8th and 9th verses, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Turn to Acts xiii. 48: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." They may try to split that passage into hairs if they like: but it says, "ordained to eternal life," in the original as plainly as it possibly can; and we do not care about all the different commentaries thereupon. You scarcely need to be reminded of Romans viii., because I trust you are well acquainted with that chapter, and understand it by this time. In the 29th, and following verses, it says: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" It would also be unnecessary to repeat the whole of the 9th chapter of Romans. As long as that remains in the Bible no man shall be able to prove Arminianism; so long as that is written there, not the most violent contortions of the passage will ever be able to exterminate the doctrine of election from the Scriptures. Let us read such verses as these: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." Then read the 22d verse: "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, en-

dured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Then go on to Romans xi. 7: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." In the 5th verse of the same chapter: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." You, no doubt, all recollect the passage in 1 Cor. i. 26–29: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things which are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." Again, remember the passage in 1 Thess. v. 9: "God hath not appointed *us* to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." And then you have my text, which methinks would be quite enough. But, if you need any more, you can find them at your leisure, if we have not quite removed your suspicions as to the doctrine not being true.

Methinks, my friends, that this overwhelming mass of Scripture testimony must stagger those who dare to laugh at this doctrine. What shall we say of those who have so often despised it, and denied its divinity, who have railed at its justice and dared to defy God and call him an Almighty tyrant, when they have heard of his having elected so many to eternal life? Canst thou, O rejecter! cast it out of the Bible? Canst thou take the penknife of Jehudi and cut it out of the word of God? Wouldst thou be like the woman at the feet of Solomon, and have the child rent in halves, that thou mightest have thy half? Is it not here in Scripture? And is it not thy duty to bow before it, and meekly acknowledge what thou understandest not?—to receive it as the truth even though thou couldst not understand its meaning? I will not attempt to prove the justice of God in having thus elected some and left others. It is not for me to vindicate my Master.

He will speak for himself, and he does so: "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" Who is he that shall say unto his father, "What hast thou begotten?" Or unto his mother, "What hast thou brought forth?" I am the Lord thy God, I create light and I create darkness. I the Lord do all these things. Who art thou that repliest against God? Tremble and kiss his rod; bow down and submit to his scepter; impugn not his justice, and arraign not his acts before thy bar, O man!

But there are some who say, "It is hard for God to choose some and leave others." Now, I will ask you one question. Is there any one of you here this morning who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off sin and walk in holiness? "Yes, there is," says some one, "I do." Then God has elected you. But another says, "No: I don't want to be holy; I don't want to give up my lusts and my vices." Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected you to it? For if you were elected you would not like it, according to your own confession. If God, this morning, had chosen you to holiness, you say you would not care for it. Do you not acknowledge that you prefer drunkenness to sobriety, dishonesty to honesty? You love this world's pleasures better than religion; then why should you grumble that God has not chosen you to religion? If you love religion, he *has* chosen you to it. If you desire it, he has chosen you to it. If you do not, what right have you to say that God ought to have given you what you do not wish for? Supposing I had in my hand something which you do not value, and I said I shall give it to such-and-such a person, you would have no right to grumble that I did not give it to you. You could not be so foolish as to grumble that the other has got what you do not care about. According to your own confession, many of you do not want religion, do not want a new heart and a right spirit, do not want the forgiveness of sins, do not want sanctification, you do not want to be elected to these things: then why should you grumble? You count these things but

as husks, and why should you complain of God who has given them to those whom he has chosen? If you believe them to be good, and desire them, they are there for thee. God gives liberally to all those who desire; and first of all, he makes them desire, otherwise they never would. If you love these things, he has elected you to them, and you may have them; but if you do not, who are you that you should find fault with God, when it is your own desperate will that keeps you from loving these things—your own simple self that makes you hate them? Suppose a man in the street should say, "What a shame it is I can not have a seat in the chapel to hear what this man has to say." And suppose he says, "I hate the preacher; I can't bear his doctrine; but still it's a shame I have not a seat." Would you expect a man to say so? No: you would at once say, "That man does not care for it. Why should he trouble himself about other people having what they value and he despises?" You do not like holiness, you do not like righteousness: if God has elected me to these things, has he hurt you by it? "Ah, but," say some, "I thought it meant that God elected some to heaven and some to hell." That is a very different matter from the gospel doctrine. He has elected men to holiness and to righteousness, and through that to heaven. You must not say that he has elected them simply to heaven, and others only to hell. He has elected you to holiness, if you love holiness. If any of you love to be saved by Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ elected you to be saved. If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it, if you desire it sincerely and earnestly. But, if you don't desire it, why on earth should you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like to other people?

II. Thus I have tried to say something with regard to the truth of the doctrine of election. And now briefly let me say that election is *absolute;* that is, it does not depend upon what we are. The text says, "God hath from the beginning chosen us unto salvation;" but our opponents say, that God chooses people because they are good; that he chooses them on account of sundry works which they have done. Now, we ask, in reply to this, what works are those on account of

which God elects his people? Are they what we commonly call "works of law"—works of obedience which the creature can render? If so, we reply to you: if men can not be justified by the works of the law, it seems to us pretty clear that they can not be elected by the works of the law; if they can not be justified by their good deeds, they can not be saved by them. Then the decree of election could not have been formed upon good works. "But," say others, "God elected them on the foresight of their faith." Now, God gives faith therefore he could not have elected them on account of faith, which he foresaw. There shall be twenty beggars in the street, and I determine to give one of them a shilling; but will any one say that I determined to give that one a shilling; that I elected him to have the shilling, because I foresaw that he would have it? That would be talking nonsense. In like manner, to say that God elected men because he foresaw they would have faith, which is salvation in the germ, would be too absurd for us to listen to for a moment. Faith is the gift of God. Every virtue comes from him. Therefore it can not have caused him to elect men, because it is his gift. Election, we are sure, is absolute, and altogether apart from the virtues which the saints have afterward. What though a saint should be as holy and devout as Paul; what though he should be as bold as Peter, or as loving as John, yet he would claim nothing from his Maker. I never knew a saint yet of any denomination who thought that God saved him because he foresaw that he would have these virtues and merits. Now, my brethren, the best jewels that the saint ever wears, if they be jewels of his own fashioning, are not of the first water. There is something of earth mixed with them. The highest grace we ever possess has something of earthliness about it. We feel this when we are most refined, when we are most sanctified; and our language must always be:

> "I the chief of sinners am;
> Jesus died for me."

Our only hope, our only plea, still hangs on grace, as exhibited in the person of Jesus Christ. And I am sure we must utterly reject and disregard all thought that our graces,

which are gifts of our Lord, which are his right-hand planting, could have ever caused his love. And we ever must sing:

> "What was there in us that could merit esteem,
> Or give the Creator delight?
> 'Twas even so Father, we ever must sing,
> Because it seemed good in thy sight."

He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy:" he saves because he will save. And if you ask me why he saves me, I can only say, because he would do it. Was there any thing in me that should recommend me to God? No; I lay aside every thing. I have nothing to recommend me. When God saved me, I was the most abject, lost, and ruined of the race. I lay before him as an infant in my blood. Verily, I had no power to help myself. Oh how wretched did I feel and know myself to be! If you had something to recommend you to God, I never had. I will be content to be saved by *grace*, unalloyed, pure grace. I can boast of no merits. If you can do so, I can not. I must sing.

> "Free grace alone, from the first to the last,
> Hath won my affection and held my soul fast."

III. Then, thirdly, this election is *eternal*. "God hath from the beginning chosen you unto eternal life." Can any man tell me when the beginning was? Years ago, we thought the beginning of this world was when Adam came upon it; but we have discovered that thousands of years before that, God was preparing chaotic matter to make it a fit abode for man; putting races of creatures upon it, who might die and leave behind the marks of his handiwork and marvelous skill, before he tried his hand on man. But that was not the beginning; for revelation points us to a period long ere this world was fashioned—to the days when the morning stars were begotten; when, like drops of dew from the fingers of the morning, stars and constellations fell trickling from the hand of God; when, by his own lips, he launched forth ponderous orbs; when, with his own hand, he sent comets, like thunderbolts, wandering through the sky, to find one day their proper sphere. We go back to years gone by, when worlds

were made and systems fashioned; but we have not even approached the beginning yet. Until we go to the time when all the universe slept in the mind of God, as yet unborn, until we enter the eternity where God, the Creator, lived alone, every thing sleeping within him, all creation resting in his mighty gigantic thought, we have not guessed the beginning. We may go back, back, back, ages upon ages. We may go back, if we might use such strange words, whole eternities, and yet never arrive at the beginning. Our wing might be tired, our imagination would die away. Could it outstrip the lightning's flashing in majesty, power, and rapidity, it would soon weary itself ere it could get to the beginning. But God from the beginning chose his people; when the unnavigated ether was yet unfanned by the wing of a single angel, when space was shoreless, or else unborn, when universal silence reigned, and not a voice or whisper shocked the solemnity of silence; when there was no being, and no motion, no time, and naught but God himself, alone in his eternity; when without the song of an angel, without the attendance of even the cherubim; long ere the living creatures were born, or the wheels of the chariot of Jehovah were fashioned; even then, "in the beginning was the Word," and in the beginning God's people were one with the Word, and "in the beginning he chose them unto eternal life." Our election, then, is eternal. I will not stop to prove it; I only just run over these thoughts for the benefit of young beginners, that they may understand what we mean by eternal, absolute election.

IV. And, next the election is *personal*. Here, again, our opponents have tried to overthrow election by telling us that it is an election of nations, and not of people. But here the apostle says, "God hath from the beginning chosen *you*." It is the most miserable shift on earth to make out that God has not chosen persons, but nations; because the very same objection that lies against the choice of persons lies against the choice of a nation. If it were not just to choose a person, it would be far more unjust to choose a nation; since nations are but the union of multitudes of persons; and to choose a nation seems to be a more gigantic crime—if election be a crime—than to choose one person. Surely, to choose ten

thousand would be reckoned to be worse than choosing one; to distinguish a whole nation from the rest of mankind does seem to be a greater extravaganza in the acts of divine sovereignty than the election of one poor mortal, and leaving out another. But what are nations but men? What are whole people but combinations of different units? A nation is made up of that individual, and that, and that. And if you tell me that God chose the Jews, I say, then, he chose that Jew, and that Jew, and that Jew. And if you say he chooses Britain, then I say he chooses that British man, and that British man, and that British man. So that it is the same thing after all. Election, then, is personal: it must be so. Every one who reads this text, and others like it, will see that Scripture continually speaks of God's people, one by one; and speaks of them as having been the special subjects of election.

> "Sons we are through God's election,
> Who by Jesus Christ believe;
> By eternal destination
> Sovereign grace is here received."

We know it is personal election.

V. The other thought is—for my time flies too swiftly to enable me to dwell at length upon these points—that election produced *good results*. "He hath from the beginning chosen you unto sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." How many men mistake the doctrines of election altogether! And how my soul burns and boils at the recollection of the terrible evils that have accrued from the spoiling and the wresting of that glorious portion of God's glorious truth! How many are there who have said to themselves, "I am elect," and have sat down in sloth, and worse than that! They have said, "I am the elect of God," and with both hands they have done wickedness. They have swiftly run to every unclean thing, because they have said, "I am the chosen child of God, irrespective of my works, therefore I may live as I list, and do what I like." O, beloved! let me solemnly warn every one of you not to carry the truth too far; or, rather not to turn the truth into error, for we can not carry it too far. We may overstep the truth; we can make that which was

meant to be sweet for our comfort, a terrible mixture for our destruction. I tell you there have been thousands of men who have been ruined by misunderstanding election; who have said, "God has elected me to heaven, and to eternal life;" but they have forgotten that it is written, God has elected them "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This is God's election—election to sanctification and to faith. God chooses his people to be holy, and to be believers. How many of you here then are believers? How many of any congregation can put their hands upon their hearts and say, "I trust in God that I am sanctified?" Is there one of you who says, "I am elect"—I remind you that you swore last week. One of you says, "I trust I am elect"—but I jog your memory about some vicious act that you committed during the last six days. Another of you says, "I am elect"—but I would look you in the face and say, "*Elect!* thou art a most cursed hypocrite! and that is all thou art." Others would say, "I am elect"—but I would remind them that they neglect the mercy-seat and do not pray. O beloved! never think you are elect unless you are holy. You may come to Christ as a sinner, but you may not come to Christ as an elect person until you can see your holiness. Do not misconstrue what I say—don't say, "I am elect," and yet think you can be living in sin. That is impossible. The elect of God are holy. They are not pure, they are not perfect, they are not spotless; but, taking their life as a whole, they are holy persons. They are marked, and distinct from others; and no man has a right to conclude himself elect except in his holiness. He may be elect, and yet lying in darkness, but he has no right to believe it; no one can see it, there is no evidence of it. The man may live one day, but he is dead at present. If you are walking in the fear of God, trying to please him, and to obey his commandments, doubt not that your name has been written in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world.

And, lest this should be too high for you, note the other mark of election, which is faith, "belief of the truth." Whoever believes God's truth, and believes on Jesus Christ, is elect. I frequently meet with poor souls, who are fretting

and worrying themselves about this thought—"How, if I should not be elect!" "Oh, sir," they say, "I know I put my trust in Jesus; I know I believe in his name and trust in his blood; but how if I should not be elect?" Poor dear creature! you do not know much about the gospel, or you would never talk so, for *he that believes is elect.* Those who are elect, are elect unto sanctification and unto faith; and if you have faith you are one of God's elect; you may know it and ought to know it, for it is an absolute certainty. If you, as a sinner, look to Jesus Christ this morning, and say—

> "Nothing in my hands I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling,"

you are elect. I am not afraid of election frightening poor saints or sinners. There are many divines who tell the inquirer, "election has nothing to do with you." That is very bad, because the poor soul is not to be silenced like that. If you could silence him so it might be well, but he will think of it, he can't help it. Say to him then, If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you are elect. If you will cast yourself on Jesus, you are elect. I tell you—the chief of sinners—this morning, I tell you in his name, if you will come to God without any works of your own; cast yourself on the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; if you will come now and trust in him, you are elect—you were loved of God from before the foundation of the world, for you could not do that unless God had given you the power, and had chosen you to do it. Now you are safe and secure if you do but come and cast yourself on Jesus Christ, and wish to be saved and to be loved by him. But think not, that any man will be saved without faith and without holiness. Do not conceive, my hearers, that some decree, passed in the dark ages of eternity, will save your souls, unless you believe in Christ. Do not sit down and fancy that you are to be saved without faith and holiness. That is a most abominable and accursed heresy, and has ruined thousands. Lay not election as a pillow for you to sleep on, or you may be ruined. God forbid that I should be sewing pillows under armholes that you may rest comfortably in your sins. Sinner! there is nothing in the Bible to palliate your

sins. But if thou art condemned, O man! if thou art lost, O woman! thou wilt not find in this Bible one drop to cool thy tongue, or one doctrine to palliate thy guilt; your damnation will be entirely your own fault, and your sin will richly merit it. Because you believe not you are condemned. "Ye believed not because ye were not of my sheep, and ye would not come to me that ye might have life." Don't fancy that election excuses sin—don't dream of it—don't rock yourself in sweet complacency in the thought of your irresponsibility. You are responsible. We must give you both things. We must have divine sovereignty, and we must have man's responsibility. We must have election, but we must ply your hearts, we must send God's truth at you; we must speak to you, and remind you of this, that while it is written, "In me is thy help;" yet it is also written, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."

VI. Now, lastly, what are the true and legitimate tendencies of right conceptions concerning the doctrine of election. First, I will tell you what the doctrine of election will make saints do under the blessing of God; and, secondly, what it will do for sinners if God blesses it to them.

First, I think election, to a saint, is one of the most stripping doctrines in all the world—to take away all trust in the flesh, or all reliance upon any thing except Jesus Christ. How often do we wrap ourselves up in our own righteousness, and array ourselves with the false pearls and gems of our own works and doings. We begin to say, "Now I shall be saved, because I have this and that evidence." Instead of that it is naked faith that saves; that faith and that alone unites to the Lamb, irrespective of works, although it is productive of them. How often do we lean on some work, other than that of our own beloved, and trust in some might, other than that which comes from on high. Now if we would have this might taken from us, we must consider election. Pause, my soul, and consider this. God loved thee before thou hadst a being. He loved thee when thou wast dead in trespasses and sins, and sent his Son to die for thee. He purchased thee with his precious blood, ere thou couldst lisp his name. Canst thou then be proud?

I know nothing, nothing, again, that is more humbling for us than this doctrine of election. I have sometimes fallen prostrate before it, when endeavoring to understand it. I have stretched my wings, and, eagle-like, I have soared toward the sun. Steady has been my eye, and true my wing, for a season; but, when I came near it, and the one thought possessed me—"God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation"—I was lost in its luster, I was staggered with the mighty thought; and from the dizzy elevation down came my soul, prostrate and broken, saying, "Lord, I am nothing, I am less than nothing. Why me? Why me?"

Friends, if you want to be humbled, study election, for it will make you humble under the influence of God's Spirit. He who is proud of his election is not elect; and he who is humbled under a sense of it may believe that he is. He has every reason to believe that he is, for it is one of the most blessed effects of election, that it helps us to humble ourselves before God.

Once again. Election in the Christian should make him very *fearless* and very *bold*. No man will be so bold as he who believes that he is elect of God. What cares he for man, if he is chosen of his Maker? What will he care for the pitiful chirpings of some tiny sparrows when he knoweth that he is an eagle of a royal race? Will he care when the beggar pointeth at him, when the blood royal of heaven runs in his veins? Will he fear if all the world stand against him? If earth be all in arms abroad, he dwells in perfect peace, for he is in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, in the great pavilion of the Almighty. "I am God's," says he, "I am distinct from other men. They are of an inferior race. Am not I noble? Am not I one of the aristocrats of heaven? Is not my name written in God's book?" Does he care for the world? Nay: like the lion that careth not for the barking of the dog, he smileth at all his enemies; and when they come too near him, he moveth himself and dasheth them to pieces. What careth he for them? He walks about them like a Colossus; while little men walk under him and understand him not. His brow is made of iron, his heart of flint—what doth he care for man? Nay: if one universal

hiss came up from the wide world, he would smile at it, for he would say,

> "He that hath made his refuge God,
> Shall find a most secure abode."

I am one of his elect. I am chosen of God and precious; and though the world cast me out, I fear not. Ah! you time-serving professors, some of you can bend like the willows. There are few oaken Christians, now-a-days, that can stand the storm; and I will tell you the reason. It is because you do not believe yourselves to be elect. The man who knows he is elect will be too proud to sin; he will not humble himself to commit the acts of common people. The believer in this truth will say, "*I* compromise my principles? *I* change my doctrines? *I* lay aside my views? *I* hide what I believe to be true? No! since I know I am one of God's elect, in the very teeth of all men I shall speak God's truth, whatever men may say." Nothing makes a man so truly bold as to feel that he is God's elect. He shall not quiver, he shall not shake, who knows that God has chosen him.

Moreover, election will make us *holy*. Nothing under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit can make a Christian more holy, than the thought that he is chosen. "Shall I sin," he says, "after God hath chosen me? Shall I transgress after such love? Shall I go astray after so much loving-kindness and tender mercy? Nay, my God; since thou hast chosen me, I will love thee; I will live to thee—

> "'Since thou, my everlasting God,
> My Father, art to come,'

I will give myself to thee, to be thine forever, by election, and by redemption, casting myself on thee, and solemnly consecrating myself to thy service."

And now, lastly, to the ungodly. What says election to you? First, you ungodly ones, I will excuse you for a moment. There are many of you who do not like election, and I can not blame you for it, for I have heard those preach election, who have sat down, and said, "I have not one word to say to the sinner." Now, I say you *ought* to dislike such

preaching as that, and I do not blame you for it. But, I say, take courage, take hope, O thou sinner, that there is election! So far from dispiriting and discouraging thee, it is a very hopeful and joyous thing that there is an election. What if I told thee perhaps none can be saved, none are ordained to eternal life, wouldst thou not tremble, and fold thy hands in hopelessness, and say, "Then how can I be saved, since none are elect?" But, I say, there is a multitude elect, beyond all counting—a host that no mortal can number. Therefore, take heart, thou poor sinner! Cast away thy despondency—mayst not thou be elect as well as any other? for there is a host innumerable chosen. There is joy and comfort for thee! Then, not only take heart, but go and try the Master. Remember, if you were not elect, you would lose nothing by it. What did the four Syrians say? "Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians, for if we stay here, we must die, and if we go to them we can but die." O sinner! come to the throne of electing mercy. Thou mayest die where thou art. Go to God; and, even supposing he should spurn thee, suppose his uplifted hand should drive thee away—a thing impossible—yet thou wilt not lose any thing; thou wilt not be more damned for that. Besides, supposing thou be damned, thou wouldst have the satisfaction at least of being able to lift up thine eyes in hell, and say, "God, I asked mercy of thee, and thou wouldst not grant it; I sought it, but thou didst refuse it." That thou never shalt say, O sinner! If thou goest to him, and askest him, thou shalt receive; for he never has spurned one yet! Is not that hope for you? What though there is an allotted number, yet it is true that all who seek belong to that number. Go thou and seek; and if thou shouldst be the first one to go to hell, tell the devils that thou didst perish thus—tell the demons that thou art a castaway, after having come as a guilty sinner to Jesus. I tell thee it would disgrace the Eternal—with reverence to his name—and he would not allow such a thing. He is jealous of his honor, and he would not allow a sinner to say that.

But, ah, poor soul! not only think thus, that thou canst not lose any thing by coming; there is yet one more thought—Dost thou love the thought of election this morning? Art

thou willing to admit its justice? Dost thou say, "I feel that I am lost; I deserve it; and that if my brother is saved I can not murmur. If God destroy me, I deserve it; but if he saves the person sitting beside me, he has a right to do what he will with his own, and I have lost nothing by it." Can you say that honestly from your heart? If so, then the doctrine of election has had its right effect on your spirit, and you are not far from the kingdom of heaven. You are brought where you ought to be, where the Spirit wants you to be; and being so this morning, depart in peace; God has forgiven your sins. You would not feel that, if you were not pardoned; you would not feel that, if the Spirit of God were not working in you. Rejoice, then, in this. Let your hope rest on the cross of Christ. Think not on election, but on Christ Jesus. Rest on Jesus—Jesus first, midst, and without end.

SERMON VI.

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING, AND THE HOUSE OF FEASTING.

"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting."—ECCLESIASTES vii. 2.

THE maxim that happiness lies between two extremes is, I believe, the dictate of prudence, and has the sanction of God's word. The ancients always spoke of this as being the most happy state of life. Somewhere between the two extremes of ecstatic joy and melancholy lies the thing we call "happiness." Ancient poets used to sing of the *via media*, or the middle way. We know that Agur, an inspired writer, prayed to God that he would give him "neither poverty nor riches," that he might walk in the middle way of life, and as the medium with regard to wealth is to be preferred, so I believe the middle way is to be chosen with regard to happiness. In the green plains betwixt two high hills is the place where happiness generally resides. The man who is not often lifted up with joy, nor often depressed in spirit through grief, who walks through the world in a calm and quiet atmosphere, bearing about him a holy complacency, a calm serenity, and an almost uniformity—that man is a happy man. He who journeys along without flying up as an eagle, or without diving down into the depths of the sea—keeps along the even tenor of his way—that man, if he continue there to his death, is entitled to the name of a happy man. But, my friends, I think it falls to the lot of very few of us always to keep there. I know it does not fall to my portion always to walk between the two extremes. I can not always sing in the vale, like Bunyan's shepherd boy: I wish I could live there, but I can not do so.

There is a high mountain on that side of the valley, and another there; and I have to climb the steep side of both those mountains. On the brow of the hill on that side there stands a fantastic structure, very much like those fairy palaces which we fabricate in our dreams with the architect of fancy, and this is called the "house of feasting." On the other side of this valley of mediocrity stands a gloomy castle overhung with damp weeds and moss; it looks like one of those desolate places where superstition has fabled that old giants used to live: it is called the "house of mourning." We have most of us alternately to go to each of these houses. Sometimes we are rejoicing in "the house of feasting," at other times we are weeping in "the castle of mourning," hanging down our heads like bulrushes, and crying, Alas, alas!

Standing thus, in the middle of the plain, as I profess to do this morning, I am about to speak to you of both those places —of that fantastic structure *there*, and of the gloomy castle *here;* and though bright-eyed cheerfulness would prompt me to say, it was "better to go to the house of feasting, than to the house of mourning;" with the word of inspiration before me, I trust to be able to show that the divine preacher spoke truth when he said—"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting."

In order that I may set this truth in as clear a light as possible, I shall invite you first to go with me to "the house of feasting;" then, to "the house of mourning," and after that we will examine two or three verses which succeed the text, and look at the wise man's reasons for preferring "the house of mourning" to "the house of feasting."

Away, away, away we go first of all to "the house of feasting," and I am sure I shall have abundance of company if I invite you there. You never need go alone to a feast; simply blow the trumpet of announcement, simply tell the people we are going to "the house of feasting," and they are all ready to go there. There is a joyous spark in every man's breast, which at once ignites his soul, and he says, Let us go; if you are about to go to a feast, I will feast with you; if there is joy in any cup, let me drink it. I am going to "the house of feasting," and I shall take you to it in three steps. We shall go

to the house of *sinful* feasting first of all. Then to the house of *innocent* feasting, and after that we will go to the house of *spiritual* feasting. I trust we shall find something good in some of those houses, but we shall find nothing so good as in "the house of mourning."

We are going, first of all, to the house of sinful feasting. We are not going inside, my dear friends, but we will look at the outside of the house, and hear a little of its history. I would have none of you cross the threshold of that place. But we are going up the side of the hill together to that house of feasting. We are going! We are going! what a crowd I have around me, and I seem to be half ashamed of myself. There is the low drunkard, and here comes the vile rake, and they are going to the same house. "Whither are you going, drunkard?" say I. "I am going to the house of feasting," says he. "And thou, bloated one, where art thou going?" "I am going to the house of feasting." I begin to be ashamed of my company. I fear that whatever the house may be, the company going there are not very choice spirits, and I hardly like to proceed further. I begin to think that the gloomy house of mourning is better than the house of feasting after all, considering the company that frequent it. I fear that I must turn back at once; I can not enter there, for I love good company. I would rather go to the house of mourning with the child of God; I would rather be chained in a dungeon, wrist to wrist with a Christian, than to live forever with the wicked in the sunshine of happiness. The company I meet makes me suspect it is true that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting. Now, I have got to the gate of this palace; I have climbed the hill, and stand there; but before I enter, I want to know something of the history of those who have gone there. I do not go in until I know whether there is any hope of my returning again. The house is comely and goodly outside, but I want to know whether it is all that it seems. I want to know if there be that happiness there which it professes to have; and I ask them to bring me out the records of the house. They bring me out a roll, wherein is kept a record of the persons who have gone there. I turn it over. I will never go into that house, for

that list of persons who have gone there, is a catalogue of woe.

I will just tell you one or two cases of persons who went to this house of feasting, or rather let me tell it to you in another way. Most of the awful catastrophes that have ever happened in this world, have happened to men when they have been in "the house of feasting." It is a fact that I shall prove in a moment or two, that the most terrible calamities that have ever come upon man or on the world, have happened in the house of mirth. Where was the world when Noah entered into the ark? Where was it when God rent the clouds and opened the windows of heaven, and sent down cataracts from the skies? Is it not written, "They were eating and drinking, they were marrying and given in marriage?" Where were Israel when the plague came and smote them, so that their carcasses fell in the wilderness? Is it not written, "While the bread was in their mouths, the wrath of God smote them?" Where were Job's sons, when the four winds came from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house? They were eating, and drinking wine in their elder brother's house. Where was Samson when he lost his strength? He was in the house of sinful pleasure, and he lay asleep on Delilah's lap. Where was Jeroboam when his hand was withered? He was offering a sacrifice before his god, unto which he had made a feast. What did Nabal when his heart was turned like a stone within him, and he died? Inspiration says he had been feasting, and his heart was merry with wine at his sheep-shearing. Who slew Amnon? Did not Absalom slay him at a feast? Turn to the melancholy catastrophes that you find recorded in holy writ, and almost every one of them happened at a feast. So, throughout the whole history of nations, I might tell you instance after instance where a feast has been a real funeral; for the most terrible calamity has followed. There is, however, one instance which I must not pass by without mentioning more at large than those I have briefly hinted at. There was a feast once, such as I think scarcely ever was seen. Ten thousand lamps lit up the gorgeous palace; the king sat on his lofty throne; and around him were his wives and concubines.

They ate, they drank, the bowls were filled to the brim, and merrily the hours danced on. Loud was the bacchanalian shout, and loud the song. They drank deep; they drank curses to the God of Jacob; they took the sacred wine-cup, and they poured in their unhallowed liquor; they drank them down, and drank again, and the merry shout rang through the hall; the viol and harp were there, and music sounded. List! list! list! it is the last feast that Babel shall ever see. Even now the enemies are at her gates. They come! They come! O, Belshazzar, read that writing there: "Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting." O Belshazzar, stay thy feasting, see the shaft of God! Lo, the death shaft; it is whizzing in the air, it has pierced his heart; he falls, he falls, and with him Babel falls! That feast was a feast of death. "Better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of such feasting" as that. Here is a melancholy proof of the assertion that I made, that most of the terrible calamities that have ever happened to men, have happened in the house of feasting.

I have read thy record, O mistress of the house; I say, woman, I have read thy record, and it is enough; I need not cross thy threshold; I do not want to see thy magnificent temple; I never wish to sit in thy splendid halls. It is enough; I am satisfied. Rather would I sleep nightly in my shroud, and sit on my coffin, and have my gravestone in the wall of my study, and live in a vault forever, than I would enter that house of feasting. Good God, may I be kept from sinful mirth! May I be kept from the house of sinful feasting! May I never be tempted to cross that threshold! O, thou young man, who art enchanted by its gayety, charmed by its music, stay, stay, for every plank in the floor is rotten, every stone that is there is dug from the quarries of hell; and if thou enterest into that mansion, thou shalt find that her steps lead down to hell, and go down to the chambers of everlasting woe. "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting."

But, my friends, be not sad; I am about to take you to a better house of joy than this. There is a house of feasting to which every Christian may go. You heard my prayer just

now, that I might never cross the threshold of the house of *sinful* feasting; but there is a house of feasting to which I would invite Christians. Christianity never was intended to make men miserable. On the contrary, it has a tendency to make them happy. There are feasts in which Christians may indulge; there are times of feasting when Christians may eat and drink, and may make their soul merry within them. Rejoice, O Christian, that thou art not shut out from all banquets. Though yon door is marked with a plague spot, there is another where thou mayest go. Startle not, for Christ himself went there. The first house that we read of Christ's entering was "the house of feasting." He was at a marriage, at Cana in Galilee, and there he turned the water into wine. O! there are feasts to which Christians may go. There are bowls out of which they may drink; there are meats of which they may eat; there are places where they may rejoice. Christians are not bound to give up pleasures that are innocent, but pleasures that are sinful. There are pleasures they may enjoy, there are feasts where the drugged cup of the drunkard is never found; where the song of lust is never heard; where the obscene word is never uttered; and such feasts I have seen; feasts of which God himself would approve; feasts where every heart was love, and every soul was joy. We were mirthful, we were happy, and yet we sinned neither in our hearts, nor with our lips.

Let me notice one or two feasts that are not sinful, but in which we may indulge. There is the family feast. Do we not read that good old Jesse called his sons together, David, and the rest of them, and they had a family feast? Ah! the family meeting is a pleasant thing, when once in the year, the sire who has his sons far away in business, invites them all to come to his house. There is a happy family, whether it be great or small; they meet around him; and the old man blesses God that he is spared to see his children. O, what a hallowed mirth that is, when each is there, and sees his brethren all around! Perhaps there may be grandchildren; but that does only increase the joy. Such feasts I have seen, and I trust I may live to see many, when I can meet my brethren, and sisters, and can sit with them, and my father and

mother, and feel that, scattered as we have been, there is yet a home where we all can come, and meet together, and be happy. Such feasts as these are allowable.

Again, there is the feast of brotherly kindness; such a feast as Joseph made for his brethren in Egypt. I wish there were more brotherly kindness in some families. It is hard when brother hates brother, when families are severed from each other. Born of the same mother, how can ye quarrel? Having the same father's instructions, rocked in the same cradle, playing under the same roof, running in the same garden, how can ye differ now? O, better if there were more brotherly love, and such feasts as Joseph made, which are allowable, when we can meet together, and pour our hearts into each other's, and talk of Jesus.

Then, again, there are feasts of hospitality, and such are not only allowable, but commendable; such as Abraham made when he saw three men passing, and he ran and fetched the kid and spread a banquet for them to eat, and thereby entertained angels unawares. Such as we find Lazarus making to his two sisters, Martha and Mary, when Jesus came to their house, and he himself sat at meat with them. Such feasts of hospitality are good things. They must not come too often, they must not be misused; but it is well to entertain the sons of God; it is well to receive the wayfarer. This Christians ought to do more than they do now, and be "given to hospitality."

There are, again, feasts of charity, such as Matthew made when he invited a great number of publicans, and he did it that Jesus might come there; and I am sure, where my Master went I never need be ashamed to go. I have gone into some persons' houses before I came to London, that I should have felt ashamed to enter if they had not invited me on a Sabbath day. I have stepped in there for the purpose of giving them religious advice. Some have said—What! going into that house? Yes; and quite right, too. "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." I have gone after "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and I have won their hearts because I went there. I have talked to them of their sins. But had I stayed away, there would have been something of this spirit: Stand by; I am holier than thou; I

can not enter your house, because you chanced on such and such a day to sin. But when I go and talk to a man, and lay my hand on his shoulder, and ask him questions, he does not mind telling out his state of mind when I am under his own roof; and when I am gone, he says, That man is not ashamed to speak to his fellows after all, though he is a preacher Make feasts of charity sometimes, and invite the poor. Have company of them. I will tell you the best dinner party that you can have. If you have "the blind, the halt, and the lame," and get them to sit around your table, you do more honor to your drawing-room than having a company of princes and nobles.

Beloved, mark you, good as the house of mourning is, excellent as its shades may be, Solomon does not say that the house of mourning is better in the sense of being morally better, that there is more virtue in weeping than in rejoicing; but he does say, it is "better to go to the house of mourning;" it is better to sit by the side of the widow; it is better to take the fatherless child on your knee; it is better to sit down and weep with those that weep, than it is to go to the pavilion of happiness and rejoice with those that rejoice. With such hearts as ours it is better. Were we perfect it would be equally good; but since we are inclined to evil, it is better we should "go to the house of mourning." God has made man upright; but the hand of sin has pushed us from the perpendicular, and we stand like the leaning tower of Pisa, inclined to the earth, and threatening to fall. It is right, then, that as we are inclined to sin, we should likewise be made to bend to sorrow.

Now, beloved, we must very hastily take a third visit "to the house of feasting," and it will be better than either of the other two—better than the first, because it is not sinful; better than the second, because more spiritual. Have I not gone to the house of feasting, sometimes, where I have feasted on divine love? Have I not soared, with the wings of eagles, beyond the clouds, beyond that glowing firmament where the stars are glittering, beyond that house where the sun strips himself of his garments, and like a giant starts upon his race? Have I not looked into heaven, and gone almost near the

throne of God in ecstacy of joy, mounting up beyond all the troubles and trials of this mortal life? Yes, so have you, beloved, sometimes, when God has given you the spirit of rejoicing; you have "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He brought me "into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love." Have you not been to that banqueting-house? Have you not tasted the delicate meats and the delicious viands which God alone prepares? Have you not had some of the happy things stored up for the saints of God, and tasted "the wines on the lees well refined?" Yes, doubtless, you have, and you have said just as Peter did, "It is good to be here." Look at that passage of Scripture. It is directly afterward stated, "not knowing what he said." And you and I have said, "O God! it is good to be here;" it is sweet to dwell upon the top of delectable mountains; it is blessed to sit in places of security, and have said, "Lord, make not this a week, but a year; not an hour, but an eternity; let me have years of the sunshine of thy countenance." You may have said, "Let this last forever;" but you do not know what you ask. Yet, beloved, really it does seem a strange thing that I should have to say, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting." I am sure I do not like "the house of mourning" half so well. I would sooner dwell on the name of my Jesus, and drink drops of honey from this well of sweetest nectar; I would sooner live on Calvary's summit, or sit forever on the top of Tabor, or live in Pisgah, and see the sweet fields beyond the swelling flood; I would rather live forever in ecstacy of delight, and see the river Jordan rolling there, and far beyond the everlasting city, with its pearly gates and its shining golden streets. But then, beloved, it must not be. We would rather have it so; but it is better for us "to go to the house of mourning," than it is to live forever, or even "to go to the house of feasting."

Now, to leave "the house of feasting," we are going "to the house of mourning." There it is, a gloomy place, up a steep rock, covered with moss, and we MUST go there. The great fisher, destiny, stands there, and with hooks in each man's flesh, he drags us on where he pleases. There is an iron

chain that links us all together, and binds us in the bonds of everlasting destiny, and go we *must* where that chain drags us; we can not resist, and we *must* "go to the house of mourning." Therefore, O child of mirth, lay aside all thy merriment, and come with me and enter the valley of tears, and wait a moment in "the house of mourning."

Some of you, my dear friends, have been in "the house of mourning" this week, and I have been called to go with you there. You have been there personally in the loss of your friends; you have been into the deep caverns of "the house of mourning.' How often have the mourners gone about the streets, and we have seen the solemn funeral march through our crowded thoroughfares. So often have I seen it that it begins to be a common thing—so often have I seen it during the last month or so, that it seems almost an old thing, and it looks as if earth were going to wreck, and all the bonds of society were about to be dissolved. I say, some of you may be suffering the loss of your friends, and may be saying, "None others have suffered as I have." Say not so; there *have* been others; the path of sorrow hath been well trodden. Yea, princes have been there; nobles have been there; earls and dukes have jostled in the crowd with the poor man who had nothing to lose but his one single child, and his yet unburied wife. There have been the nobles of the world. Death has touched with his impartial hand the palace of the noble and the cottage of the peasant. Say not, therefore, that thou art hardly dealt with. The gravel stones may be in thy mouth, and the wormwood lying there; but others have had those gravel stones, and have drunk the wormwood as well as thou. Thou art not alone, alas! far from it.

Many of us have gone "to the house of mourning," simply as visitors, to console others; and I can say, from the recesses of my soul, that I have sorrowed this week at certain periods, I think, almost as much as if I had been the real mourner myself, when at different hours I have been with the dying. Only last Friday, just before the clock struck twelve, at midnight, I was in a cottage by the bedside of a dying woman; and often have I gone direct from one death-bed to another. It is not a pleasant thing, but it is my duty, and I find a re-

ward in it. Let me say, do not fear "to go to the house of mourning" as visitors! Go and comfort those who are distressed. Why should we tremble? Go, every one of you; there is an imperative duty on every one member of this church to visit the sick. We do not do that as much as we ought to do. You must help me. I met a man in the street only yesterday, and he complained that I had not been to see his wife, but he excused me; and he said, he knew, single-handed, I could not see every body. You must go and help the mourning, and give them comfort in every way.

Now, we are going "to the house of mourning" for a moment or two this morning. Let me, first of all, before we enter that house, do as I did with "the house of feasting"—let me ask for the record roll, and see whether it be true that this house is better than the other. Where is the roll? bring it out, dark maiden, thou who art clad in black, with gloomy eyes and arching eyebrows. She brings it out. There is the list. Ah! there are some names there who have not been much profited by adversity. I see the name of Ahaz. "Ahaz sinned yet more against the Lord, and rebelled the more against him." I see another name there; I see the name of Jonah, who said, "I do well to be angry, even unto death," because his gourd had been taken away. I see the name of Israel, of whom God has written, "Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more," etc.; and there is Ephraim, of whom he said, "Let him alone, he is given up to idols." There are some names in that catalogue which have not profited by it. I see some such here this morning. O, ungodly men and women, God has spoken not once, but twice; he has taken out the rod; he has bruised you, and you have not kissed the hand that has smitten you. He will say next, Angel, angel, thou hast used my rod! Incorrigible wretch! he turns not; draw the sword, cut down the rebel; he who spurns my rod shall feel my sword. What think you of yourselves? Have any of you laughed at God's rod? Are any of you as hardened as you were before? Are you still resolved to go on in your wicked ways, and persevere in your transgression? If so, assuredly the sword of the Lord is sharp; it is furbished; he doth whet his sword in

heaven, and it shall cut through soul and body to everlasting destruction. How I rejoice to see on the other hand that there are some who have been profited in this house of adversity. There is the name of Israel, and it says, "And Israel turned unto the Lord when he was smitten by his adversary." In that book is the name of David, and David said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." Further down there stands the name of Manasseh; the Lord took him among the thorns, and Manasseh prayed unto the Lord out of the low dungeon. And, as I turn down, I find many other names that have been benefited by going there Look, there is even the name of Job. The Lord gave unto Job seven times as much as he had before. That is a good list; I think that when I look at it, it is true of this house, that it is better "than the house of feasting." However, before I leave that matter entirely, I must make one brief remark, and that is, that there is a "house of mourning" to which I would have you go every day. O, it is a place of woe indeed; it is a place of agony indeed; it is a place of suffering indeed. That spot is called Gethsemane. This is a place of mourning to which I would have you often go. It is the garden of Gethsemane, where the mighty Jesus, the Son of God, bent his knees in agony, and wrestled with his Father: "I am exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." His sweat was as it were drops of blood falling to the ground.

> "Gethsemane, the olive-press!
> And why so called, let Christians guess."

Gethsemane, with its gloomy olive-shades and its dark brook. Truly, the King himself hath gone over the dark brook Kedron. Oh, thou Gethsemane! thy bitter herbs are sweet to me. I could dwell in thy glory forever.

> "Thou art heaven on earth to me,
> Lonesome, dark Gethsemane."

I have been there, and love to visit it. I never feel so holy, so really happy, as when I sit in that house of mourning, and see my Saviour wrestling for my sins. It is better to go to Gethsemane, the house of mourning, than to any place of feasting in the world.

Now, dear friends, time will only permit us just to mention the arguments of the wise man here. I find I have got into a very large subject; and I might preach a much longer sermon, but I never like to detain you beyond the time. Let us read what the wise man says: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting;" first, "for that is the end to which we must come;" and, secondly, "the living will lay it to heart;" thirdly, "by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better;" and, fourthly, "the heart of the wise man is in the house of mourning."

It is better to go to the house of mourning, then, first of all, because "that is the end to which we must come." We must die: there is no discharge in this war. The decree is sworn to; it is determined in heaven; it is written like the laws of the Medes and Persians, so that it can not be altered—that each must go to the house of mourning, and must die. It is good for us, then; it is greatly wise to talk with our last hours. We have heard of a man who had a skeleton in his bed-room; and he was a wise man, if he used it wisely. We know the Egyptians at every feast had a skeleton at the end of the table; and they were wise men, if they thought rightly of it. It is great wisdom to make death our every-day companion. The horses that they use in war, at first are very much afraid of the smoke and the noise; but, I am told, that they take those horses into the barracks first, and fire into their faces with powder, until they are so used to it, that they will go unterrified into the battle. So we ought often to lay our souls in death; to make death a familiar thing; to talk with it every day. How can we do it better than by going to the house of mourning, where our friends lie dead.

> "Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,
> To damp our brainless ardors, and abate
> That glare of life, which often blinds the wise.
> Our dying friends are pioneers to smooth
> Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars
> Of terror and abhorrence nature throws
> 'Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make
> Welcome as safe yon port from every storm."

So says Young, and he says well. It is well to think of our lost friends, and to go to "the house of mourning."

Again; the wise man says: "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart." If you go to the "house of feasting," there is nothing to lay to heart: it is all froth; it is lighter than vanity; it is a bubble; touch it, and it vanishes. But in "the house of mourning," there is something solemn, which will bear the touch and still endure. In darkness there seems to be something more solid than in sunshine. I feel that when I go to "the house of mourning," I get something to bring away, and lay to my heart. If I go to "the house of feasting," it does not touch my heart. I wear a garb of feasting; I put on those things that are necessary on such occasions, and there it ends. I have got nothing to lay to heart.

Yet again, the wise man says: "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." It is positively a good thing for us to be sad. When the strings are cut that bind heart to earth, then we can soar. We are chained to earth; but there is water in these eyes, which, like *aquafortis*, can eat away the iron, and set us free. The heart is made better by sorrow, because it is made more free from earth. It is made better by sorrow, again, because it becomes more sensitive, more impressed with the lessons of God's word. We can shut our ears to the voice of God in mirth; but in "the house of mourning," we can hear every whisper. It is better to hear of him in this "house of mourning." The noise of the song doth drown the still small voice of God; but in the "house of mourning," you can hear every foot-fall, even the voice of time—that ticking of the clock, which tells now, now, now! "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better."

Now, to conclude, it says: "The heart of the wise man is in the house of mourning." There are some places we ought to go to, just as many people go to church and chapel. They go to chapel, and leave their hearts at their shop. If you have done so this morning, you had better send for your hearts before you go, my friends. But there are some places, I say, to which we ought to go without our hearts; and we ought to do so whenever we go to "the house of feasting."

Perhaps, in some sense, we may have our hearts there; but we had better not have them there. They are sure to get somewhat contaminated. But when we go to "the house of mourning," we may take them there, because we are sure to bring them back again. When we go to "the house of feasting," we are inclined to say, Stop there, heart, it is a pleasant place; but when we go to "the house of mourning," we say, I will not leave thee in that gloomy place. When I get to "the house of mourning," I can speak out; but in "the house of feasting," I hold my tongue with a bridle. In "the house of mourning," I can speak with a bereaved brother and sister; I can talk freely with them; I can talk my heart out there; I can speak my soul there, and need not hold it in. Oh! I can speak my Master's dear name, and tell of the wonders of his grace, and enlarge upon his wondrous preciousness.

Finally, and we have done; we wish you to take this home. You had better go to "the house of mourning" than to any place of feasting. Better be clad in the drapery of woe, and sit in the weeds of sorrow; better be girt with sackcloth, and cover thy head with ashes than be forever feasting and dancing, or even enjoying the rightful and lawful pleasures of this world. "It is better to go to the house of mourning;" God has said it; let not unbelief deny what God positively declares. Unto all of you who know not how soon each of you may be there, I speak in the name of the Lord, and I say, "Go to the house of mourning." In a little while death may be in our midst, as it has been. Even now he is flapping his wings around this gallery, and looking in each pew, to see who is there. He is floating across the pews, and saying—"Where is the man or woman I am to have." God points death to the man, and as surely the man dies. At all events you may be called to go to "the house of mourning" very soon in some way or other; but say when you get there—"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting." If you get an invitation to a wedding, and an invitation to a funeral, lay the funeral note on the top. Do not disdain to go there, O son of God, for the Holy Ghost will so reveal Jesus by the bed-side of the mourner, that it will be to thee a Bethel. Oh, sinner, ungodly and impenitent, neither "the

house of mourning nor feasting" can benefit thee of themselves. It is the power of the Holy Spirit alone which can give thee life. It is Jesus alone who can make thee a forgiven sinner.

May this discourse be blessed to your souls, and to the Triune God be glory. Amen.

SERMON VII.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

"This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."—LEVITICUS, xvi. 34.

THE Jews had many striking ceremonies which marvelously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. One of the chief of these was the day of atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was, also, the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That day of atonement happened only *once a year*, to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die; and that though he would come a second time, yet it would be without a sin-offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered; morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God, to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice; but the day of atonement being the type of the one great propitiation, it was but once a year that the high priest entered within the vail with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and *appointed time;* it was not left to the choice of Moses or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date; it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day, as you find at the 29th verse: "In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month;" and at no other time was the day of atonement to be, to show us that God's great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by himself. Christ's expiation occurred but once, and then not by any chance; God had settled it from before the foundation of the world;

and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was he led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers he was dumb. It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once; it was at an appointed time in the year, because in the fullness of time Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the *person who made the atonement;* secondly, *the sacrifice whereby the atonement was typically made;* thirdly, *the effects of the atonement;* and fourthly, *our behavior on the recollection of the atonement*, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that *Aaron, the high priest*, did it. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering." Inferior priests slaughtered the lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that every thing on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labor was left to him. So, beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and he only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "he hath made *us* priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer atonement; he, and he alone, must go within the vail; he must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood; for though thanksgiving is shared in by all Christ's elect body, atonement remains alone to him, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice, that the High Priest on this

day was *a humbled priest.* You read in the 4th verse, "He shall put on the holy *linen* coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen miter shall he be attired: these are holy garments." On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments; he had the miter, with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue; the splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold, and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other bedizments, wherewith he came before the people as the accepted High Priest. But on this day he had none of them. The golden miter was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the breastplate was taken off, and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen miter, and girded with a linen girdle. On that day, he humbled himself just as the people humbled themselves. Now, that is a notable circumstance. You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out, that the priest's dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments, and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when he made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement, arrayed in all the glories of his ancient throne in heaven. Upon his brow there was no diadem save the crown of thorns; around him was cast no purple robe save that which he wore for a time in mockery; in his hand was no scepter save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon him; he had no sandals of pure gold, neither was he dressed as a king; he had none of those splendors about him which should make him mighty and distinguished among men; he came out in his simple body, ay, in his naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from him, and made him hang before God's sun and God's universe, naked, to his shame and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed. O! my soul, adore thy Jesus, who, when he made atonement, humbled himself and wrapped around him a garb of thine inferior clay. O! angels, you can understand what were the glories that he laid aside. O! thrones, and principalities,

and powers, you can tell what was the diadem with which he dispensed, and what the robes he laid aside to wrap himself in earthly garbs. But, men, you can scarce tell how glorious is your High Priest now, and you can scarce tell how glorious he was before. But, O! adore him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of his own body, of his own humanity in which he made atonement for your sins

In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be *a spotless high priest;* and because there were none such to be found, Aaron being a sinner himself as well as the people, you will remark that Aaron had to sanctify himself and make an atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3d verse you read, "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering," These were for himself. In the 6th verse it is said, "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house." Yea, more; before he went into the vail with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the vail to make atonement there for himself. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th verses, it is said, "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock [that is, the bullock that he killed for himself], and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." This was before he killed the goat, for it says, "Then shall he kill the goat." Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the vail, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense) wherewith he purified himself.

Aaron must not go within the vail until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him, and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day; and it is said in this chapter that he had to wash himself many times. We read in the 4th verse, "These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on." And at the 24th verse, "He shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments." So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron on that day should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God. Ah! beloved, and we have a spotless High Priest; we have one who needed no washing, for he had no filth to wash away; we have one who needed no atonement for himself, for he, forever, might have sat down at the right hand of God, and never have come on earth at all. He was pure and spotless; he needed no incense to wave before the mercy-seat to hide the angry face of justice; he needed nothing to hide and shelter him; he was all pure and clean. O! bow down and adore him, for if he had not been a holy High Priest, he could never have taken thy sins upon himself, and never have made intercession for thee. O! reverence him, that, spotless as he was, he should come into this world and say, "For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Adore and love him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement, took away thy guilt.

Again, the atonement was made by *a solitary high priest*—alone and unassisted. You read in the 17th verse, "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite

certain that every thing was done by the High Priest alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When he was put to death, his disciples forsook him and fled; they crucified none of his followers with him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honor of the atonement. Thieves were crucified with him because none would suspect that they could assist him; but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of his disciples must go to die there with him. O glorious High Priest, thou hast done it all alone. O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of thine stood with thee; no Eleazar, no Phinehas, burned incense; there was no priest, no Levite, save thyself. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Then give all the glory unto his holy name, for alone and unassisted he made atonement for your guilt. The bath of his blood is your only washing; the stream of water from his side is your perfect purification. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has wrought out the work of our salvation.

Again it was a *laborious high priest* who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavored to count up how many creatures he had to kill, and find that there were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning, and the other in the evening; they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the high priest killed those two lambs. Further, if you will turn to Numbers xxix. 7–11, "And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: but ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: and their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram, a several tenth deal for one

lamb, throughout the seven lambs: one kid of the goats for a sin offering; besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings." Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid of the goats; making ten. The two lambs make twelve. And in the chapter we have been studying, it is said, in the 3d verse: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering," which makes the number fourteen. Then, after that, we find there were two goats, but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, then there were fifteen beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people, now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the atonement of sin offering had been accepted. He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day. Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. O, what a labor the atonement was to him! It was a work that all the hands in the universe could not have accomplished; yet, he completed it alone. It was a work more laborious than the treading of the wine-press, and his frame, unless sustained by the divinity within, could scarce have borne such stupendous labor. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane; there was the watching all night, just as the high priest did for fear that uncleanliness might touch him; there was the hooting and the scorn which he suffered every day before—something like the continual offering of the lamb; then there came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate's hall; then there was the *via dolorosa* through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of his people's sins on his shoulders. Ay, it was a divine labor that our great High Priest did on that day—a labor mightier than the making of the world: it was the new making of a world, the taking of its sins upon his Almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea. The atonement was made by a toilsome, laborious High Priest, who worked, *indeed*, that

day; and Jesus, though he had toiled before, yet never worked as he did on that wondrous day of atonement.

II. Thus have I led you to consider the person who made the atonement: let us now consider for a moment or two THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE. You read at the 5th verse, "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering." And at the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, "And he shall take two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be a scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness." The first goat I consider to be the great type of Jesus Christ the atonement; *such I do not consider the scape-goat to be.* The first is the type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing that was sacrificed: it must be *a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year.* Even so was our Lord, a perfect man, in the prime and vigor of his manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that *it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel*, as we are told at the 5th verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before he died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued him at, a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat so they brought him to be offered, not, indeed, with the intention that he should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they brought him to Pilate, and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" O, beloved! indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought him. Strange, that it should be so! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" his own led him forth to slaughter; his own dragged him before the mercy seat.

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scape-goat, was brought by the people, *God's decision* was in it still. Mark, it is said, "Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat." I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die; and even the very man who sold him was appointed to it—so saith the Scriptures. Christ's death was fore ordained, and there was not only man's hand in it, but God's. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal of it is the Lord's." So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord's disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and *see it die.* The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling for a moment; observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, ye have here your Saviour. See his Father's vengeful sword sheathed in his heart; behold his death agonies; see the clammy sweat upon his brow; mark his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth; hear his sighs and groans upon the cross; hark to his shriek, "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani," and you have more now to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. Mark the blood as from his wounded hands it flows, and from his feet it finds a channel to the earth; from his open side in one great river see it gush. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so, Christian, thy Saviour dying for thee made the great atonement for thy sins, and thou mayst go free.

But mark, this goat's blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was *taken within the vail*, and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus' blood: "Sprinkled now with blood the throne." The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord, and was not brought into the most holy place; but this goat's blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, to make an atonement. So, O child of God, thy Saviour's blood has made atonement within

the vail; he has taken it there himself; his own merits and his own agonies are now within the vail of glory, sprinkled now before the throne. O glorious Sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore thee, for by thy one offering thou hast made atonement forever, even as this one slaughtered goat made atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

One of the first effects of the death of this goat was *the sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy.* You read at the end of the 15th verse, "He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat; and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." The holy place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy, but where man comes there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here this morning. I thought, "I am going to the house of God, and that house is a holy place;" but when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, "Ah, it has been made defiled; but oh! there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again." "Ah!" I thought, "there is one poor prayer that we shall offer: it is a holy prayer, for God the Holy Spirit dictates it, but then it is an unholy prayer, for *we* have uttered it, and that which cometh out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted." "But ah!" I thought again, "it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood, and therefore it must be a holy prayer." And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises, and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, "There is blood on them all; our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus, and as such it will be accepted through him." O, beloved! is it not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy: that though sin is mixed with them all, and we think them defiled, yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every

stain; and the service this day is as holy in God's sight as the service of the cherubim, and is as acceptable as the psalms of the glorified; we have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb, and it is accepted through him.

But observe, the second great fact was that *their sins were taken away*. This was set forth by the scape-goat. You read at the 20th verse: "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful atonement was finished, and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many opinions there are about this scape-goat. One of the most strange opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men, and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men think that this word scape-goat, Azazel, was the name of the devil who was worshiped by the heathen in the form of a goat; and they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an atonement for sin, and the other went away to be tormented by the devil, and was called *Azazel*, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness. To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief. It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted. Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making atonement by his death for the sins of the people; the second is sent away into the wilderness, and nothing is heard of it any more forever; and here a difficulty suggests itself: "Did Jesus Christ go where he was never heard of any more forever?" That is what we have not to consider at all. The first goat was a type of the atonement; the second is the type of the effect of the atonement. The second goat

went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head, and so it sets forth, as a scape-goat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union a fine picture of the scape-goat dying in the wilderness: it was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons, and there dying a doleful and miserable death. Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing in the Scriptures that warrants it in the least degree. The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and there tumbled down a high rock to die; but, as an excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he did more than God ever told him to do. God told him to take a goat and let it go; as to what became of it neither you nor I know any thing; that is purposely left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon his head, just as the scape-goat, and he is gone from us—that is all: the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi, who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem, and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile, when there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone, and he could see it no more. Then the people's sins were all gone too. Now, what a fine type that is if you don't inquire any further! But if you will get meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scape-goat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head; the goat is going; the people lose sight of it; a fit man goes with it; the sins are going from them, and now the man has arrived at his destination; the man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there over the mountains, glad of its liberty; it is not quite gone; a little further, and now it is

lost to sight. The man returns, and says he can no longer see it; then the people clap their hands, for their sins have all gone to. O, soul! canst thou see thy sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey, and carry our sins with us; but O! how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the depths of the wilderness of forgetfulness, where they shall never be found any more against us forever. But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the atonement; it was a type of the sins going away, and so it was a type of the atonement, for you know, since our sins are thereby lost it is the fruit of the atonement; but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So we have this great and glorious thought before us, that by the death of Christ there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon his head. For I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scape-goat's head—sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, sins little and sins great, sins few and sins many, sins against the law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great day of atonement. Sinner, O, that thou hadst a share in my Master's atonement! O! that thou couldst see him slaughtered on the cross! Then mightest thou see him go away leading captivity captive, and taking thy sins where they might never be found.

I have now an interesting fact to tell you, and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus, xxv. 9, and you will read: "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of *the jubilee* to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound through out all your land." So that one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but "on the tenth day of the seventh month" Ay, methinks, that was the best part of it. The scape-goat is gone, and the sins are gone; and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds,

> "The year of jubilee is come,
> Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged

lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us. So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again; when he dies, heaven, the long-lost inheritance is ours. Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a day of atonement.

One more thought concerning the effects of this great day of atonement, and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter—*entrance within the vail.* Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the vail, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now, beloved, the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the vail: "Having boldness, therefore, to enter within the vail, let us come with boldness unto the throne of the heavenly grace." The vail of the temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne is now ours. O, child of God, I know not of any privilege which thou hast, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the throne. Access to the mercy seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy. Precious throne of grace! I never should have had any right to come there if it had not been for the day of atonement; I never should have been able to come there if the throne had not been sprinkled with the blood.

IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is OUR PROPER BEHAVIOR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at the 29th verse, "And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall *afflict your souls.*" That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Sure, sinner, there is nothing that should move thee to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away thy guilt. "Law and terrors do but harden," but, methinks, the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the

death of Jesus. On that day "ye shall afflict your souls." And even you, ye Christians, when you think that your Saviour died, you should afflict your souls; you should say,

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Drops of grief ought to flow, ay, streams of undissembled sympathy with him; to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Saviour. "Afflict your souls," O ye children of Israel, for the day of atonement is come. Weep o'er your Jesus; weep for him that died; weep for him who was murdered by your sins, and "afflict your souls."

Then, better still, we are to "*do no work at all*," as you find in the same verse 29th. When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and "do no work at all." Rest from your works as God did from his on the great Sabbath of the world; rest from your own righteousness; rest from your toilsome duties: rest in him. "We that believe do enter into rest." As soon as thou seest the atonement finished, say, "It is done, it is done! Now will I serve my God with zeal, but now I will no longer seek to save myself; it is done, it is done for aye."

Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to *come out again in his glorious garments.* When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day; he being thankful that his life was spared (having been allowed to go into the holy place and to come out of it), and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they desired now to be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." Beloved, let us go into our houses with joy; let us go into our gates with praise. The atonement is finished; the High Priest is gone within the vail; salvation is now complete. He has laid aside the linen garments, and he stands before you with his breastplate, and his miter, and his em-

broidered vest, in all his glory. Hear how he rejoices over us, for he hath redeemed his people, and ransomed them out of the hands of his enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; let us clap our hands with joy, for he liveth, he liveth; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scape-goat is gone, our sins are gone with it. Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to his gates with praise, for he hath loved his people, he hath blessed his children, and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee. Praise ye the Lord! Praise ye the Lord!

SERMON VIII.

THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR.

"These are the two covenants."—GALATIANS, iv. 24.

THERE can not be a greater difference in the world between two things than there is between law and grace. And yet, strange to say, while the things are diametrically opposed and essentially different from each other, the human mind is so depraved, and the intellect, even when blessed by the Spirit, has become so turned aside from right judgment, that one of the most difficult things in the world is to discriminate properly between law and grace. He who knows the difference, and always recollects it—the essential difference between law and grace—has grasped the marrow of divinity. He is not far from understanding the gospel theme in all its ramifications, its outlets, and its branches, who can properly tell the difference between law and grace. There is always in a science some part which is very simple and easy when we have learned it, but which, in the commencement, stands like a high threshold before the porch. Now, the first difficulty in striving to learn the gospel is this. Between law and grace there is a difference plain enough to every Christian, and especially to every enlightened and instructed one; but still, when most enlightened and instructed, there is always a tendency in us to confound the two things. They are as opposite as light and darkness, and can no more agree than fire and water; yet man will be perpetually striving to make a compound of them—often ignorantly, and sometimes willfully. They seek to blend the two, when God has positively put them asunder.

We shall attempt this morning to teach you some of the allegories of Sarah and Hagar, that you may thereby better

understand the essential difference between the covenants of law and of grace. We shall not go fully into the subject, but shall only give such illustrations of it as the text may furnish us. First, I shall want you to notice *the two women*, whom Paul uses as types—Hagar and Sarah; then I shall notice *the two sons*—Ishmael and Isaac; in the third place, I shall notice *Ishmael's conduct to Isaac;* and I shall conclude by noticing *the different fates of the two.*

I. First, we invite you to notice THE TWO WOMEN—Hagar and Sarah. It is said that they are the types of the two covenants; and before we start we must not forget to tell you what the covenants are. The first covenant for which Hagar stands is the covenant of works, which is this: "There is my law, O man; if thou, on thy side, wilt engage to keep it, I, on my side will engage that thou shalt live by keeping it. If thou wilt promise to obey my commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry thee to heaven. But mark me, if thou violatest one command, if thou dost rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy thee forever." That is the Hagar covenant—the covenant propounded on Sinai, amid tempests, fire and smoke—or, rather, propounded, first of all, in the garden of Eden, where God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." As long as he did not eat of the tree, but remained spotless and sinless, he was most assuredly to live. That is the covenant of the law, the Hagar covenant. The Sarah covenant is the covenant of grace, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus, which covenant is this: "Christ Jesus on his part engages to bear the penalty of all his people's sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon his shoulders; and the Father promises on his part that all for whom the Son doth die shall most assuredly be saved, that seeing they have evil hearts, he will put his law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it, and that seeing they have sins, he will pass them by and not remember them any more forever. The covenant of works was, "Do this and live, O man!" But the covenant of grace is, "Do this, O Christ, and thou shalt live, O man!" The difference of the covenant rests here. The one was made with man, the other with Christ; the

one was a conditional covenant, conditional on Adam's standing, the other is a conditional covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us. There are no conditions whatever in the covenant of grace, or if there be conditions, the covenant gives them. The covenant gives faith, gives repentance, gives good works, gives salvation, as a purely gratuitous unconditional act; nor does our continuance in that covenant depend in the least degree on ourselves. The covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well.

Now come and look at the allegory. First, I would have you notice, that *Sarah, who is the type of the new covenant of grace, was the original wife of Abraham.* Before he knew anything about Hagar, Sarah was his wife. The covenant of grace was the original covenant after all. There be some bad theologians who teach that God made man upright, and made a covenant with him; that man sinned, and as a kind of afterthought, God made a covenant with Christ for the salvation of his people. Now, that is a complete mistake. The covenant of grace was made before the covenant of works; for Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, did stand as its head and representative; and we are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the obedience and sprinkling and blood of Jesus. We, long ere we fell, were loved of God; he did not love us out of pity to us, but he loved his people, considered purely as creatures. He loved them when they became sinners; but when he started with them he considered them as creatures. He allowed them to fall into sin, to show forth the riches of his grace, which existed before their sin. He did not love them and choose them from among the rest, after their fall, but he loved them beyond their sin, and before their sin. He made the covenant of grace before we fell by the covenant of works. If you could go back to eternity, and ask which is the oldest born, you would hear that grace was born before law—that it came into the world long before law was promulgated. Older even than the fundamental principles which guide our morals is that great fundamental rock of grace, in covenant made of old, long ere seers preached the law, and long ere Sinai smoked. Long before Adam stood in the garden, God had ordained his people to eternal life, that they might be saved through Jesus.

Notice next; *though Sarah was the elder wife, yet Hagar bare the first son.* So the first man, Adam, was the son of Hagar; though he was born perfectly pure and spotless, he was not the son of Sarah when he was in the garden. Hagar had the first son. She bore Adam, who lived for a time under the covenant of works. Adam lived in the garden on this principle. Sins of commission were to be his fall; and if he omitted to do the sin, then he was to stand for ever. Adam had it entirely in his own power whether he would obey God or not: his salvation, then, rested simply on this basis, "If thou touchest that fruit, thou diest; if thou obeyest my command, and dost not touch it, thou shalt live." And Adam, perfect as he was, was but an Ishmael, and not an Isaac, till after his fall. *Apparently*, at any rate, he was a Hagarene, though *secretly*, in the covenant of grace, he may have been a child of promise. Blessed be God, we are not under Hagar now; we are not under the law since Adam fell. Now Sarah hath brought forth children. The new covenant is "the mother of us all."

But notice again, *Hagar was not intended to be a wife; she never ought to have been any thing but a hand-maid to Sarah.* The law was never intended to save men: it was only designed to be a hand-maid to the covenant of grace. When God delivered the law on Sinai, it was apart from his ideas that any man would ever be saved by it; he never conceived that man would attain perfection thereby. But you know that the law is a wondrous hand-maid to grace. Who brought us to the Saviour? Was it not the law thundering in our ears? We should never have come to Christ if the law had not driven us there; we should never have known sin if the law had not revealed it. The law is Sarah's hand-maid to sweep our hearts, and make the dust fly so that we may cry for blood to be sprinkled that the dust may be laid. The law is, so to speak, Jesus Christ's dog, to go after his sheep and bring them to the shepherd; the law is the thunderbolt which affrighteth ungodly men and maketh them turn from the error of their ways, and seek after God. Ah! if we knew rightly how to use the law, if we understand how to put her in her proper place, and make her obedient to her mistress, then all will be well.

But this Hagar will always be wishing to be mistress, as well as Sarah; and Sarah will never allow that, but will be sure to treat her harshly and drive her out. We must do the same; and let none murmur at us, if we treat the Hagarenes harshly in these days—if we sometimes speak hard things against those who are trusting in the works of the law. We will quote Sarah as an example. *She* treated Hagar harshly; and so will we. We mean to make Hagar flee into the wilderness: we wish to have nothing to do with her. Yet it is very remarkable, that coarse and ill-featured as Hagar is, men have always a greater love for her than they have for Sarah; and they are prone continually to be crying, "Hagar, thou shalt be my mistress," instead of saying, "Nay, Sarah, I will be thy son, and Hagar shall be bondmaid." What is God's law now? It is not *above* a Christian—it is *under* a Christian. Some men hold God's law like a rod, *in terrorem*, over Christians, and say, "If you sin you will be punished with it." It is not so. The law is under a Christian; it is for him to walk on, to be his guide, his rule, his pattern: "we are not under the law, but under grace." Law is the road which guides us, not the rod which drives us, nor the spirit which actuates us. The law is good and excellent, if it keep its place. Nobody finds fault with the handmaid because she is not the wife; and no one shall despise Hagar because she is not Sarah. If she had but remembered her office, it had been all well, and her mistress had never driven her out. We do not wish to drive the law out of chapels as long as it is kept in its right position; but when it is set up as mistress, away with her; we will have naught to do with legality.

Again: *Hagar never was a free woman, and Sarah never was a slave.* So, beloved, the covenant of works never was free, and none of her children ever were. All those who trust in works never are free, and never can be, even could they be perfect in good works. Even if they have no sin, still they are bond-slaves; for when we have done all that we ought to have done, God is not our debtor; we are debtors still to him, and still remain as bond-slaves. If I could keep all God's law, I should have no right to favor; for I should have done no more than was my duty, and be a bond-slave still. The law

is the most rigorous master in the world; no wise man would love its service; for after all you have done, the law never gives you a "thank you" for it, but says, "Go on, sir, go on!" The poor sinner trying to be saved by law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill, and never getting a step further, but only being whipped continually; yea, the faster he goes, the more work he does; the more he is tired, so much the worse for him. The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned; the more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees. Hagar was a slave; Ishmael, moral and good as he was, was nothing but a slave, and never could be more. Not all the works he ever rendered to his father could make him a free-born son. Sarah never was a slave. She might be sometimes taken prisoner by Pharaoh, but she was not a slave then; her husband might sometimes deny her, but she was his wife still; she was soon owned by her husband, and Pharaoh was soon obliged to send her back. So the covenant of grace might seem once in jeopardy, and the representative of it might cry, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but it never was in real hazard. And sometimes the people under the covenant of grace may seem to be captives and bond-slaves; but still they are free. O that we knew how to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

One thought more: *Hagar was cast out, as well as her son; but Sarah never was.* So the covenant of works has ceased to be a covenant. Not only have the people been cast away who trusted in it, not simply was Ishmael cast out, but Ishmael's mother too. So the legalist may not only know himself to be damned, but the law as a covenant has ceased to be; for mother and son are both driven out by the gospel, and those who trust in law are sent away by God. You ask today, who is Abraham's wife? Why Sarah; does she not sleep side by side with her husband in the Machpelah's cave at this instant? There she lies, and if she lie there for a thousand years to come, she will still be Abraham's wife, while Hagar never can be. O, how sweet to think that the covenant of old was in all things ordered well, and never, never

shall be removed. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Ah! ye legalists, I do not wonder that ye teach the doctrine of falling away, because that is consistent with your theology. Of course, Hagar has to be driven out, and Ishmael too. But we who preach the covenant of free and full salvation, know that Isaac never shall be driven out, and that Sarah shall never cease to be the friend and wife of Abraham. Ye Hagarenes! ye ceremonialists! ye hypocrites! ye formalists! of what avail will it be, when at last ye shall say, "Where is my mother? Where is my mother, the law?" O, she is driven out, and thou mayest go with her into eternal oblivion. But where is my mother? the Christian can say at last; and it will be said, "There is the mother of the faithful, Jerusalem above, the mother of us all;" and we shall enter in, and dwell with our Father and our God.

II. Now we are going to review the TWO SONS. While the two women were types of the two covenants, the two sons were types of those who live under each covenant. Isaac is a type of the man who walks by faith, and not by sight, and who hopes to be saved by grace; Ishmael is of the man who lives by works, and hopes to be saved by his own good deeds. Let us look at these two.

First, *Ishmael is the elder.* So, beloved, the legalist is a great deal older than the Christian. If I were a legalist today, I should be some fifteen or sixteen years older than I am as a Christian; for we are all born legalists. Speaking of Arminians, Whitefield said, "We are all born Arminians." It is grace that turns us into Calvinists, grace that makes Christians of us, grace that makes us free, and makes us know our standing in Christ Jesus. The legalist must be expected, then, to have more might of argument than Isaac; and when the two boys are wrestling, of course Isaac generally gets a fall, for Ishmael is the biggest fellow. And you must expect to hear Ishmael making the most noise, for he is to be a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; whereas Isaac is a peaceful lad. He always stands up for his mother and when he is mocked, he can go and tell his mother that Ishmael mocked him; but that is all that he can do; he has

not much strength. So you notice now-a-days. The Ishmaelites are generally the strongest, and they can give us desperate falls when we get into argument with them. In fact, it is their boast and glory that the Isaacs have not much power of reasoning—not much logic. No, Isaac does not want for it; for he is an heir according to the promise, and promise and logic do not much consist together. His logic is his faith; his rhetoric is his earnestness. Never expect the gospel to be victorious when you are disputing after the manner of men; more usually look to be beaten. If you are discoursing with a legalist, and he conquers you, say, "Ah! I expected that; it shows I am an Isaac; for Ishmael will be sure to give Isaac a threshing, and I am not at all sorry for it. Your father and mother were in the prime of life, and were strong: and it was natural that you should overcome me, for my father and mother were quite old people."

But where was *the difference* between the two lads in their outward appearance? There was *no difference between them as to ordinances*, for both of them were circumcised. There was no distinction with regard to outward and visible signs. So, my dearly beloved, there is often no difference between Ishmael and Isaac, between the legalist and the Christian, in matters of outward ceremonies. The legalist takes the sacrament and is baptized: he would be afraid to die if he did not. And *I do not believe there was much difference as to character.* Ishmael was nearly as good and honorable a man as Isaac; there is nothing said against him in Scripture; indeed, I am led to believe that he was an especially good lad, from the fact that when God gave a blessing, he said, "With Isaac shall the blessing be," Abraham said, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" He cried to God for Ishmael, because he loved the lad, doubtless, for his disposition. God said, Yea, I will give Ishmael such and such a blessing; he shall be the father of princes; he shall have temporal blessings; but God would not turn aside, even for Abraham's prayer. And when Sarah was rather fierce, as she must have been that day when she turned Hagar out of the house, it is said, "It grieved Abraham because of his son;" and I do not suspect that Abraham's attachment was a foolish one. There is one trait in Ishmael's

character that you love very much. When Abraham died, he did not leave Ishmael a single stick or stone, for he had previously given him his portion and sent him away; yet he came to his father's funeral; for it is said that his sons Ishmael and Isaac buried him in Machpelah. There seems, then, to have been but little difference in the character of the two. So, dearly beloved, there is little difference between the legalist and the Christian as to the outward walk. They are both the visible sons of Abraham. It is not a distinction of life; for God allowed Ishmael to be as good as Isaac, in order to show that it was not the goodness of man that made any distinction, but that he "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Then *what was the distinction?* Paul has told us that the first was born after the *flesh*, and the second after the *Spirit*. The first was a natural son, the other a spiritual one. Ask the legalist. "You do good works; you have repented, you say; you are keeping the law, and you have no need to repent. Now, where did you get your strength from?" Perhaps he says, "Grace;" but if you ask him what he means, he says that he used it; he had grace, but he used it. Then the difference is, *you* used your grace, and others did not. Yes. Well, then, it is your own doing. You may call it grace, or you may call it mustard; it was no grace, after all, for it was your using, you say, that made the difference. But ask poor Isaac how he has kept the law, and what does he say? Very badly, indeed. Are you a sinner, Isaac? "O, yes! an exceedingly great one; I have rebelled against my father times without number; I have often gone astray from him." Then you do not think yourself quite as good as Ishmael, do you? "No." But yet there is a difference between you and him, after all. What has made the difference? "Why, grace has made me to differ." Why is not Ishmael an Isaac? Could Ishmael have been an Isaac? "No," says Isaac, "it was God who made me to differ from the first to the last; he made me a child of promise before I was born, and he must keep me so."

"Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

Isaac has more really good works; he does not stand second to Ishmael. When he is converted, he labors, if it be possible, to serve his father far more than the legalist does his master; but still, doubtless, if you were to hear both their tales, you would hear Isaac say that he was a poor miserable sinner, while Ishmael would make himself out a very honorable Pharisaic gentleman. The difference is not in works, however, but in motives; not in the life, but in the means of sustaining life; not in what they do, so much as in how they do it. Here, then, is the difference between some of you. Not that you legalists are worse than Christians; you may be often better in your lives, and yet you may be lost. Do you complain of that as unjust? Not in the least. God says men must be saved by faith; and if you say, "No, I will be saved by works," you may try it, but you will be lost forever. It is as if you had a servant, and you should say, "John, go and do such-and-such a thing in the stable;" but he goes away and does the reverse, and then says, "Sir, I have done it very nicely." "Yes," you say, "but that is not what I told you to do." So God has not told you to work out your salvation by good works; but he has said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." So that when you come before God with your good works, he will say, "I never told you to do that. I said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved." "Ah!" you say, "I thought the other was a great deal better way." Sir, you will be lost for your thoughts. "Why is it that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness," when Israel, who followed after righteousness, hath not attained it? It is this: "Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law."

III. Now I will briefly say a word or two concerning ISHMAEL'S CONDUCT TO ISAAC. It says that Ishmael mocked Isaac. Have not some of you, dear sons of Hagar, felt exceedingly irritated when you heard this doctrine? You have said, "It is dreadful, it is horrible, it is quite unjust, that I may be as good as I like, but if I am not a son of the promise, I can not be saved; it is really awful, it is an immoral doc-

trine; it does a deal of damage, and ought to be stopped." Of course! That shows that you are an Ishmael. Of course, Ishmael will mock at Isaac; and we need no further explanation. Where the pure sovereignty of God is preached, where it is held that the child of the promise, and not the child of the flesh, is the heir, the child of the flesh always makes a bubbub about it. What said Ishmael to Isaac? "What business have you here? Am I not my father's eldest son? I should have had all the property, if it had not been for you. Are you above me?" That is how the legalist talks. "Is not God the Father of every body? Are we not all his children? He ought not to make any difference." Said Ishmael: "Am not I as good as you? Do I not serve my father as well? As for you, you know you are your mother's favorite; but my mother is as good as yours." And so he teased and mocked at Isaac. That is just how you Arminians do with free salvation. The legalist says, "I don't see it, I can not have it, and I won't; if we are both equal in character, it can not be fair that one should be lost, and the other saved." And thus he mocks at free grace. You may get on very easily, if you do not preach free grace too fully, but if you dare to speak such things, though they are obnoxious to the crowd, what will people say? They call them "baits for popularity." (See the *so-called* FREEMAN newspaper.) Few fishes, however, bite at those baits. Most men say, "I hate him, I can not bear him; he is so uncharitable." You say we preach this to gain popularity! Why, it is, upon the surface of it, a barefaced lie; for the doctrine of God's sovereignty will always be unpopular; men will always hate it, and grind their teeth, just as they did when Jesus taught it. Many widows, he said, were in Israel, but to none of them was the prophet sent, save unto a widow of Sarepta. And many lepers were in Israel, but none of them were healed, except one who came far away from Syria. A fine popularity our Saviour got from that sermon. The people ground their teeth at him; and all the popularity he had would have been to be pushed down the hill, from which, it is said, they would have cast him headlong, but he made his way out of them, and escaped. What! *popular* to humble a man's pride, to abolish man's standing, and

make him cringe before God as a poor sinner? No; it will never be popular till men be born angels, and all men love the Lord, and that will not be just yet, I ween.

IV. But we have to inquire WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO SONS?

First, *Isaac had all the inheritance, and Ishmael none.* Not that Ishmael came off poorly, for he had many presents, and became very rich and great in this world; but he had no spiritual inheritance. So the legalist will get many blessings as a reward for his legality; he will be respected and honored. "Verily," said Christ, "the Pharisees have their reward." God does not rob any man of his reward. Whatever a man angles for, he catches. God pays men all he owes, and a great deal over; and those who keep his law, even in this world, will receive great favors. By obeying God's command, they will not injure their bodies as much as the vicious, and they will preserve their reputation better—obedience does good in this way. But then Ishmael had none of the inheritance. So, thou poor legalist, if thou art depending on thy works, or on any thing, except the free sovereign grace of God, for thy deliverance from death, thou wilt not have so much as a foot of the inheritance of Canaan, but in that great day when God shall allot the portions of all the sons of Jacob, there will be not a scrap for thee. But if thou art a poor Isaac, a poor, guilty, trembling sinner; and if thou sayest, "Ishmael has his hands full,

> "'But nothing in my hands I bring,
> Simply to the cross I cling.'"

If thou art saying this morning—

> "I am nothing at all,
> But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

. ' thou renouncest all the works of the flesh, and dost confess, the chief of sinners am, but I am the child of the promise; and Jesus died for me," thou shalt have an inheritance, and thou shalt not be robbed of it by all the mocking Ishmaels in the world; nor shall it be diminished by the sons of Hagar. Thou mayest sometimes be sold, and carried down to Egypt, but God will bring his Josephs and his Isaacs back again, and

thou shalt yet be exalted to glory, and sit on Christ's right hand. Ah! I have often thought what consternation there will be in hell when outwardly good men go there. "Lord," saith one as he goes in, "am I to go into that loathsome dungeon? Did not I keep the Sabbath? Was not I a strict Sabbatarian? I never cursed or swore in all my life. Am I to go there? I paid tithes of all that I possessed, and am I to be locked up there? I was baptized; I took the Lord's Supper; I was every thing that ever a man could be, that was good. It is true, I did not believe in Christ; but I did not think I needed Christ, for I thought I was too good and too honorable; and am I to be locked up there?" Yes, sir! and among the damned thou shalt have this pre-eminence, that thou didst scorn Christ most of all. They never set up an anti-Christ. They followed sin, and so didst thou in thy measure, but thou didst add to thy sin, this most damnable of sins; that thou didst set up thyself as an anti-Christ, and bowed down and worshiped thine own fancied goodness. Then God will proceed to tell the legalist: "On such a day I heard thee rail at my sovereignty; I heard thee say it was unfair of me to save my people, and distribute my favors after the counsel of my own will; thou didst impugn thy Creator's justice, and justice thou shalt have in all its power." The man had thought he had a great balance on his side, but he finds it is only some little grain of duty; but then God holds up the immense roll of his sins, with this at the bottom: "Without God, without hope, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel!" The poor man then sees that his little treasure is not half a mite, while God's great bill is ten thousand million talents; and so with an awful howl, and a desperate shriek, he runs away with all his little notes of merit that he hoped would have saved him; crying, "I am lost! I am lost, with all my good works! I find my good works were sands, but my sins were mountains; and because I had not faith, all my righteousness was but white-washed hypocrisy."

Now, once more, *Ishmael was sent away, and Isaac was kept in the house.* So there are some of you, when the searching day shall come to try God's church, though you have been living in the church as well as others, though you have got the

mask of profession on you, will find that it will not avail. You have been like the elder son; wherever a poor prodigal has come into the church, you have said, "As soon as thy son is come which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Ah! envious legalist, thou wilt be banished at last from the house. I tell you, legalist, and formalist, that you have no more to do with Christ than the heathens have, and though you have been baptized with Christian baptism, though you sit at a Christian table, though you hear a Christian sermon, you have neither part nor lot in the matter, any more than a Catholic or a Mohammedan, unless you are trusting simply in the grace of God, and are an heir according to the promise. Whosoever doth trust to his works, though it be ever so little, will find that that little trust will ruin his soul. All that nature spins must be unraveled. That ship which works have builded must have her keel cut in halves. A soul must trust simply and wholly to the covenant of God, or else that soul is lost. Legalist, thou hopest to be saved by works. Come, now, I will treat thee respectfully. I will not charge thee with having been a drunkard, or a swearer; but I want to ask thee, art thou aware, that in order to be saved by thy works, it is requisite that thou shouldst be entirely perfect? God demands the keeping of the whole law. If you have a vessel with the smallest crack in it, it is not a whole one. Have you never committed sin in all your life? Have you never thought an evil thought, never had an evil imagination? Come, sir, I would not suppose that you have stained those white kid gloves with any thing like lust, or carnality, or that fine mouth of yours, which uses such chaste language, ever condescended to an oath, or any thing like lasciviousness; I will not imagine that you have ever sung a lascivious song; I will leave that out of the question—but hast thou never sinned? "Yes," sayest thou. Then mark this: "*the soul that sinneth, it shall die;*" and that is all I have to say to thee. But if thou wilt deny that thou hast ever sinned, dost thou know that if in future thou commit but one sin—though thou shouldst live for seventy years a perfect life, and at the end of that seventy years thou shouldst commit one sin, all thy obedience would go for nothing; for "*He*

that offends in one point is guilty of all." "Sir," you say, "you are going on a wrong supposition, for though I believe I ought to do some good works, I believe Jesus Christ is very merciful, and though I am not exactly perfect, I am sincere, and I think sincere obedience will be accepted instead of perfect obedience." You do, indeed! and pray what is sincere obedience? I have known a man get drunk once a week, he was very sincere, and he did not think he was doing wrong so long as he was sober on a Sunday. Many people have what they call a sincere obedience, but it is one which always leaves a little margin for iniquity. But then you say, "I do not take too much margin, it is only a little sin I allow." My dear sir, you are quite in error as to your sincere obedience, for if this be what God requires, then hundreds of the vilest characters are as sincere as you are. But I do not believe you are sincere. If you were sincere, you would obey what God says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It strikes me thy sincere obedience is a sincere delusion, and such thou wilt find it. "Oh," sayest thou, "I believe that after all we have done, we must go to Jesus Christ, and we must say, 'Lord, there is a great deficiency here, wilt thou make it up?'" I have heard of weighing witches against the parish Bible, and if they were found heavier they were declared to be innocent; but to put the witch and the Bible in the same scale is a new idea. Why Christ will not get in the scale with such a conceited fool as thou art. You wish Christ to be a make-weight. He is much obliged to you for the compliment, but he will accept no such menial service. "Oh," sayest thou, "he shall *assist* me in the matter of salvation." Yes, I know that would please you; but Christ is a very different kind of Saviour; he has a propensity when he does a thing to do it all. You may think it strange, but he never likes any assistance. When he made the world, he did not ask the angel Gabriel so much as to cool the molten matter with his wing, but he did it entirely himself. So it is in salvation: he says, "My glory I will not give to another." And I beg to remind thee as thou professest to go to Christ, and yet to have a little share in the business thyself, that there is a passage in the Scriptures which is *apropos* to thee, and which thou mayest

masticate at thy leisure: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." For if you mix the two together, you spoil them both. Go home, sir, and make yourself a stirabout with fire and water, endeavor to keep in your house a lion and a lamb, and when you have succeeded in doing these, tell me you have made works and grace agree, and I will tell you, you have told me a lie even then, for the two things are so essentially opposite, that it can not be done. Whosoever among you will cast all his good works away, and will come to Jesus with this "Nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING,

> "*Nothing* in my hands I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling,"

Christ will give you good works enough, his Spirit will work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure, and will make you holy and perfect; but if you have endeavored to get holiness before Christ, you have begun at the wrong end, you have sought the flower before you have the root, and are foolish for your pains. Ishmaels, tremble before him now! If others of you be Isaacs, may you ever remember that you are children of the promise. Stand fast. Be not entangled by the yoke of bondage, for you are not under the law, but under grace.

SERMON IX.

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST.*

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—PHILIPPIANS, ii. 9–11.

I ALMOST regret this morning that I have ventured to occupy this pulpit, because I feel utterly unable to preach to you for your profit. I had thought that the quiet and repose of the last fortnight had removed the effects of that terrible catastrophe; but on coming back to the same spot again, and more especially standing here to address you, I feel somewhat of those painful emotions which well-nigh prostrated me before. You will, therefore, excuse me this morning if I make no allusion to that solemn event, or scarcely any. I could not preach to you upon a subject that should be in the least allied to it. I should be obliged to be silent if I should bring to my remembrance that terrific scene in the midst of which it was my solemn lot to stand. God shall overrule it, doubtless. It may not have been so much by *the malice* of men, as some have asserted; it was, perhaps, simple wickedness—an intention to disturb a congregation; but certainly with no thought of committing so terrible a crime as that of the murder of those unhappy creatures. God forgive those who were the instigators of that horrid act! They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul. *It shall not stop us, however*, we are not in the least degree daunted by it. I shall preach

* First sermon after recovering from the illness produced by the accident at Surrey Gardens.

there again yet; ay, and God shall give us souls there, and Satan's empire shall tremble more than ever. "God is with us; who is he that shall be against us?" The text I have selected is one that has comforted me, and, in a great measure, enabled me to come here to-day—the single reflection upon it had such a power of comfort on my depressed spirit. It is this: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

I shall not attempt to preach upon this text; I shall only make a few remarks that have occurred to my own mind; for I could not preach to-day; I have been utterly unable to study, but I thought that even a few words might be acceptable to you this morning, and I trust to your loving hearts to excuse them. O, Spirit of God, magnify thy servant's weakness, and enable him to honor his Lord, even when his soul is cast down within him.

When the mind is intensely set upon one object, however much it may, by divers calamities, be tossed to and fro, it invariably returns to the place which it had chosen to be its dwelling-place. You have noticed it in the case of David. When the battle had been won by his warriors, they returned flushed with victory. David's mind had, doubtless, suffered much perturbation in the mean time; he had dreaded alike the effects of victory and of defeat; but have you not noticed how his mind, in one moment, returned to the darling object of his affections? "Is the young man, Absalom, safe?" said he, as if it mattered not what else had occurred, if his beloved son were but secure! So, beloved, is it with the Christian. In the midst of calamities, whether they be the wreck of nations, the crash of empires, the heaving of revolutions, or the scourge of war, the great question which he asks himself, and asks of others too, is this—Is Christ's kingdom safe? In his own personal afflictions his chief answer is—Will God be glorified, and will his honor be increased by it? If it be so, says he,

although I be but as smoking flax, yet if the sun is not dimmed I will rejoice; and though I be a bruised reed, if the pillars of the temple are unbroken, what matters it that my reed is bruised? He finds it sufficient consolation, in the midst of all the breaking in pieces which he endures, to think that Christ's throne stands fast and firm, and that though the earth had rocked beneath *his* feet, yet Christ standeth on a rock which never can be moved. Some of these feelings, I think, have crossed our minds. Amid much tumult and divers rushings to and fro of troublous thoughts, our souls have returned to the darling object of our desires, and we have found it no small consolation, after all, to say, "It matters not what shall become of us: God hath highly exalted *him*, and given *him* a name which is above every name: that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow."

This text has afforded sweet consolation to every heir of heaven. Allow me very briefly, to give you the consolations of it. *To the true Christian there is much comfort in the very fact of Christ's exaltation.* In the second place, *there is no small degree of consolation in the reason of it.* "*Wherefore*, also, God hath highly exalted him;" that is, because of his previous humiliation. And thirdly, there is no small amount of really divine solace in the thought of *the person who has exalted Christ.* "Wherefore *God* also"—although men despise him and cast him down—"God also hath highly exalted him."

I. First, then, IN THE VERY FACT OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION THERE IS, TO EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN, A VERY LARGE DEGREE OF COMFORT. Many of you who have no part nor lot in spiritual things, not having love to Christ, nor any desire for his glory, will but laugh when I say that this is a very bottle of cordial to the lip of the weary Christian, that Christ, after all, is glorified. To you it is no consolation, because you lack that condition of heart which makes this text sweet to the soul. To you there is nothing of joy in it; it does not stir your bosom; it gives no sweetness to your life; for this very reason, that you are not joined to Christ's cause, nor do you devoutly seek to honor him. But the true Christian's heart leapeth for joy, even when cast down by divers sorrows and temptations, at the remembrance that Christ is exalted, for in

that he finds enough to cheer his own heart. Note here, beloved, that the Christian has certain features in his character which make the exaltation of Christ a matter of great joy to him. First, he has, in his own opinion, and not in his own opinion only, but in reality, a *relationship to Christ*, and therefore he feels an interest in the success of his kinsman. Ye have watched the father's joy when, step by step, his boy has climbed to eloquence or fame; ye have marked the mother's eye, as it sparkled with delight when her daughter grew up to womanhood, and burst forth in all the grandeur of beauty. Ye have asked why they should feel such interest; and ye have been told, because the boy was his, or the girl was hers. They delighted in the advancement of their little ones, because of their relationship. Had there been no relationship, they might have been advanced to kings, emperors, or queens, and they would have felt but little delight. But from the fact of kindred, each step was invested with a deep and stirring interest. Now, it is so with the Christian. He feels that Jesus Christ, the glorified "Prince of the kings of the earth," is his brother. While he reverences him as God, he admires him as the man-Christ, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and he delights, in his calm and placid moments of communion with Jesus, to say to him, "O Lord, thou art my brother" His song is, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." It is his joy to sing—

"In ties of blood with sinners one,"

Christ Jesus is; for he is man, even as we are: and he is no less and no more man than we are, save only sin. Surely, when we feel we are related to Christ, his exaltation is the source of the greatest joy to our spirits: we take a delight in it, seeing it is one of our family that is exalted. It is the Elder Brother of the great one family of God in heaven and earth; it is the Brother to whom all of us is related.

There is also in the Christian not only the feeling of relationship merely, but there is a feeling of *unity in the cause.* He feels that when Christ is exalted, it is himself exalted in some degree, seeing he has sympathy with his desire of promoting the great cause and honor of God in the world. I have

no doubt that every common soldier who stood by the side of the Duke of Wellington felt honored when the commander was applauded for the victory; "for," said he, "I helped him, I assisted him. It was but a mean part that I played; I did but maintain my rank; I did but sustain the enemies' fire; but now the victory is gained, I feel an honor in it, for I helped, in some degree, to gain it." So the Christian, when he sees his Lord exalted, says, "It is the Captain that is exalted, and in his exaltation all his soldiers share. Have I not stood by his side? Little was the work I did, and poor the strength which I possessed to serve him, but still I aided in the labor;" and the commonest soldier in the spiritual ranks feels that he himself is in some degree exalted when he reads this: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name"—a renown above every name—"that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Moreover, the Christian knows not only that there is this unity in design, but that there is *a real union* between Christ and all his people. It is a doctrine of revelation seldom descanted upon, but never too much thought of—the doctrine that Christ and his members are all one. Know you not, beloved, that every member of Christ's church is a member of Christ himself? We are "of his flesh and of his bones," parts of his great mystical body: and when we read that our head is crowned, O rejoice, ye members of his—his feet or his hands—though the crown is not on you, yet, being on your Head, you share the glory, for you are one with him. See Christ yonder, sitting at his Father's right hand! Believer! he is the pledge of thy glorification; he is the surety of thine acceptance; and, moreover, he is thy representative. The seat which Christ possesses in heaven he has not only by his own right, as a person of the Deity, but he has it also as the representative of his whole church; for he is their forerunner, and he sits in glory as the representative of every one of them. O rejoice, believer, when thou seest thy Master exalted from the tomb, when thou beholdest him exalted up to heaven. Then, when thou seest him climb the steps of light, and sit upon his lofty throne, where angels' ken can scarcely reach

him; when thou hearest the acclamations of a thousand seraphs; when thou dost note the loud-pealing choral symphony of millions of the redeemed: think, when thou seest him crowned with light; think, that thou art exalted too in him, seeing that thou art a part of himself. Happy art thou if thou knowest this, not only in doctrine, but in sweet experience too. Knit to Christ, welded to him, grown into him, parts and portions of his very self; we throb with the heart of the body; when the head itself is glorified, we share in the praise; we feel that his glorification bestows an honor upon us. Ah! beloved, have you ever felt that unity to Christ? Have you ever felt a unity of desire with him? If so, you will find this rich with comfort; but if not—if you know not Christ—it will be a source of grief rather than of pleasure to you that he is exalted; for you will have to reflect that he is exalted to crush you; exalted to judge you and condemn you; exalted to sweep this earth of its sins, and cut the curse up by the roots, and you with it, unless you repent and turn unto God with full purpose of heart.

There is yet another feeling, which I think is extremely necessary to any very great enjoyment of this truth, that Christ is exalted. It is a feeling of *entire surrender of one's whole being to the great work of seeking to honor him.* Oh! I have striven for that: would God I might attain unto it! I have now concentrated all my prayers into one, and that one prayer is this, that I may die to self, and live wholly to him. It seems to me to be the highest stage of man, to have no wish, no thought, no desire but Christ; to feel that to die were bliss, if it were for Christ; that to live in penury and woe, and scorn, and contempt, and misery, were sweet for Christ; to feel that it did not matter what became of one's self, so that one's Maker was but exalted; to feel that though, like a sere leaf, you are blown in the blast, you are quite careless whither you are going, so long as you feel that the Master's hand is guiding you according to his will. Or rather to feel that though, like the diamond, you must be cut, that you care not how sharply you may be cut, so that you may be made fit to be a brilliant in *his* crown; that you care little what may be done to you, if you may but honor *him*. If any

of you have attained to that sweet feeling of self-annihilation, you will look up to Christ as if he were the sun, and you will say of yourself, "O Lord, I see thy beams; I feel myself to be not a beam from thee, but darkness swallowed up in thy light. The most I ask is, that thou wilt live in me, that the life I live in the flesh may not be my life, but thy life in me, that I may say with emphasis, as Paul did, 'For me to live is Christ.'" A man that has attained to this never need care what is the opinion of this world. He may say, "Do you praise me? do you flatter me? Take back your flatteries; I ask them not at your hands; I sought to praise my Master; you have laid the praises at my door; go lay them at *his*, and not at mine. Do you scorn me? do you despise me? Thrice happy am I to bear it, if you will not scorn and despise *him!*" And if you will, yet know this, that he is beyond your scorn; and, therefore, smite the soldier for his Captain's sake; ay, strike, strike; but the King you can not touch, he is highly exalted; and though you think you have gotten the victory, you may have routed one soldier of the army, but the main body is triumphant. One soldier seems to be smitten to the dust, but the Captain is coming on with his victorious cohorts, and shall trample you, flushed with your false victory, beneath his conquering feet. As long as there is a particle of selfishness remaining in us, it will mar our sweet rejoicing in Christ; till we get rid of it, we shall never feel constant joy. I do think that the root of sorrow is self. If we once got rid of that, sorrow would be sweet, sickness would be health, sadness would be joy, penury would be wealth, so far as our feelings with regard to them are concerned. *They* might not be changed, but *our feelings* under them would be vastly different. If you would seek happiness, seek it at the roots of your selfishness; cut up your selfishness, and you will be happy. I have found that whenever I have yielded to the least joy when I have been praised, I have made myself effeminate and weak; I have then been prepared to feel acutely the arrows of the enemy; but when I have said of the praises of men, "Yes, what are you? worthless things!" then I could also say of their contempt: "Come on! come! I'll send you all where I sent the praises; you may go together, and fight

your battles with one another; but as for me, let your arrows rattle on my mail, they must not, and they shall not, reach my flesh." But if you give way to one, you will to another. You must seek and learn to live wholly on Christ; to sorrow when you see *Christ* maligned and dishonored, to rejoice when you see *him* exalted; and then you will have constant cause for joy. Sit down now, O reviled one! poor despised and tempted one, sit down; lift up thine eyes, see him on his throne, and say within thyself: "Little though I be, I know I am united to him; he is my love, my life, my joy: I care not what happens, so long as it is written, 'The Lord reigneth.'"

II. Now, briefly upon the second point. Here also is the very fountain and well-spring of joy, in THE REASON OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." Why? Because, "he, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." This, of course, relates to the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As God, Christ needed no exaltation: he was higher than the highest, "God over all, blessed for ever." But the symbols of his glory having been for a while obscured, having wrapped his Godhead in mortal flesh, his flesh with his Godhead ascended up on high, and the man-God, Christ Jesus, who had stooped to shame, and sorrow, and degradation, was highly exalted, "far above all principalities and powers," that he might reign Prince-regent over all worlds, yea, over heaven itself. Let us consider for one moment that depth of degradation to which Christ descended; and then, my beloved, it will give you joy to think, that for that very reason his manhood was highly exalted! Do you see that Man—

> "The humble Man before his foes,
> The weary Man and full of woes?"

Do you mark him as he speaks? Note the marvelous eloquence which pours from his lips, and see how the crowds

attend him? But do you hear, in the distance, the growling of the thunders of calumny and scorn? Listen to the words of his accusers. They say he is "a drunken man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;" "he has a devil, and is mad." All the whole vocabulary of abuse is exhausted by vituperation upon him. He is slandered, abused, persecuted! Stop! Do you think he is by this cast down, by this degraded? No, for this very reason: "*God hath highly exalted him.*" Mark the shame and spitting that have come upon the cheek of yonder poor oppressed prisoner! See his hair plucked with cruel hands; mark ye how they torture him and how they mock him. Do you think that this is all dishonorable to Christ? It is apparently so; but list to this: "He became obedient," and therefore "*God hath highly exalted him.*" Ah! there is a marvellous connection between that shame, and spitting, and the bending of the knee of seraphs; there is a strange yet mystic link which unites the calumny and the slander with the choral symphonies of adoring angels. The one was, as it were, the seed of the other. Strange that it should be, but the black, the bitter seed, brought forth a sweet and glorious flower which blooms forever. He suffered and he reigned; he stooped to conquer, and he conquered for he stooped, and was exalted for he conquered.

Consider him further still. Do you mark him in your imagination nailed to yonder cross! O eyes! ye are full of pity, with tears standing thick! O! how I mark the floods gushing down his cheeks! Do you see his hands bleeding, and his feet too, gushing gore? Behold him! The bulls of Bashan gird him round, and the dogs are hounding him to death! Hear him! "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani?" The earth startles with affright. A God is groaning on a cross! What! Does not this dishonor Christ? No; it honors him! Each of the thorns becomes a brilliant in his diadem of glory; the nails are forged into his scepter, and his wounds do clothe him with the purple of empire. The treading of the wine-press hath stained his garments, but not with stains of scorn and dishonor. The stains are embroideries upon his royal robes forever. The treading of that wine-press hath made his garments

purple with the empire of a world; and he is the Master of an universe forever. O Christian! sit down and consider that thy Master did not mount from the earth's mountains into heaven, but from her valleys. It was not from heights of bliss on earth that he strode to bliss eternal, but from the depths of woe he mounted up to glory. O! what a stride was that, when at one mighty step, from the grave to the throne of the Highest, the man-Christ, the God, did gloriously ascend. And yet reflect! He in some way, mysterious yet true, was exalted because he suffered. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Believer, there is comfort for thee here, if thou wilt take it. If Christ was exalted through his degradation, so shalt thou be. Count not thy steps to triumph by thy steps upward, but by those which are seemingly downward. The way to heaven is down-hill. He who would be honored forever must sink in his own esteem, and often in that of his fellow-men. O! think not of yon fool who is mounting to heaven by his own light opinions of himself and by the flatteries of his fellows, that he shall safely reach paradise; nay, that shall burst on which he rests, and he shall fall and be broken in pieces. But he who descends into the mines of suffering, shall find unbounded riches there; and he who dives into the depths of grief, shall find the pearl of everlasting life within its caverns. Recollect, Christian, that thou art exalted when thou art disgraced; read the slanders of thine enemies as the plaudits of the just; count that the scoff and jeer of wicked men are equal to the praise and honor of the godly; their praise is censure, and their censure praise. Reckon, too, if thy body should ever be exposed to persecution, that it is no shame to thee, but the reverse; and if thou shouldst be privileged (and thou mayest) to wear the blood-red crown of martyrdom, count it no disgrace to die. Remember, the most honorable in the church are "the noble army of martyrs." Reckon that the greater the sufferings they endured, so much the greater is their "eternal weight of glory," and so do thou, if thou standest in the brunt and thick of the fight, remember

that thou shalt stand in the midst of glory. If thou hast the hardest to bear, thou shalt have the sweetest to enjoy. On with thee, then—through floods, through fire, through death, through hell, if it should lie in thy path. Fear not. He who glorified Christ because he stooped shall glorify thee; for after he has caused thee to endure a while, he will give thee "a crown of life which fadeth not away."

III. And now, in the last place, beloved, there is yet another comfort for you. THE PERSON who exalted Christ is to be noticed. "GOD also hath highly exalted him." The emperor of all the Russias crowns himself: he is an autocrat, and puts the crown upon his own head: but Christ hath no such foolish pride. Christ did not crown himself. "GOD also hath highly exalted him." The crown was put upon the head of Christ by God; and there is to me a very sweet reflection in this—that the hand that put the crown on Christ's head, will one day put the crown on ours; that the same Mighty One who crowned Christ, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," will crown us, when he shall make us "kings and priests unto him forever." "I know," said Paul, "there is laid up for me a crown of glory which fadeth not away, which God, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day."

Now, just pause over this thought—that Christ did not crown himself, but that his Father crowned him; that he did not elevate himself to the throne of majesty, but that his Father lifted him there, and placed him on his throne. Why, reflect thus: man never highly exalted Christ. Put this then in opposition to it.—"*God* also hath highly exalted him." Man hissed him, mocked him, hooted him. Words were not hard enough—they would use stones. "They took up stones again to stone him." And stones failed; nails must be used, and he must be crucified. And then there comes the taunt, the jeer, the mockery, while he hangs languishing on his death-cross. Man did not exalt him. Set the black picture there. Now put this, with this glorious, this bright scene, side by side with it, and one shall be a foil to the other. *Man* dishonored him; "*God* also exalted him." Believer, if all men speak ill of thee, lift up thy head, and say, "Man exalted not my Master; I thank him that he exalts not me. The

servant should not be above his master, nor the servant above his lord, nor he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

"If on my face for his dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be;
I 'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
For he 'll remember me."

God will remember me, and highly exalt me after all, though man casts me down.

Put it, again, in opposition to the fact, that Christ did not exalt himself. Poor Christian! *you* feel that you can not exalt yourself. Sometimes you can not raise your poor depressed spirits. Some say to you, "O! you should not feel like this." They tell you, "O! you should not speak such words, nor think such thoughts." Ah! "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith." Ay, and I will improve upon it, "nor a friend either." It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act. Our minds are differently made, each in its own mold, which mold is broken afterward, and there shall never be another like it. We are all different, each one of us; but I am sure there is one thing in which we are all brought to unite in times of deep sorrow, namely, in a sense of helplessness. We feel that we can not exalt ourselves. Now remember our Master felt just like it. In the 22d Psalm, which, if I read it rightly, is a beautiful soliloquy of Christ upon the cross, he says to himself, "I am a worm, and no man." As if he felt himself so broken, so cast down, that instead of being more than a man, as he was, he felt for a while less than man. And yet, when he could not lift finger to crown himself, when he could scarce have a thought of victory, when his eyes could not flash with even a distant glimpse of triumph—then his God was crowning him. Art thou so broken in pieces, Christian? Think not that thou art cast away forever; for "God also hath highly exalted him," who did not exalt himself; and this is a picture and prophecy of what he will do for thee.

And now, beloved, I can say little more upon this text save that I bid you now for a few minutes meditate and think upon it. O! let your eyes be lifted up; bid heaven's blue

vail divide; ask power of God—I mean spiritual power from on high, to look within the vail. I bid you not look to the streets of gold, nor to the walls of jasper, nor to the pearly-gated city. I do not ask you to turn your eyes to the white-robed hosts, who forever sing loud hallelujahs; but yonder, my friends, turn your eyes,

> "There, like a man, the Saviour sits
> The God, how bright he shines;
> And scatters infinite delight
> On all the happy minds."

Do you see him?

> "The head that once was crowned with thorns
> Is crowned with glory now;
> A royal diadem adorns
> That mighty victor's brow.
>
> "No more the bloody crown,
> The cross and nails no more;
> For hell itself shakes at his frown,
> And all the heavens adore"

Look at him! Can your imagination picture him? Behold his transcendant glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up; the pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun; the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed. He in himself is brighter than the sun, more terrible than armies with banners. See him! See him! O! hide your heads, ye monarchs; put away your gaudy pageantry, ye lords of this poor narrow earth! His kingdom knows no bounds; without a limit his vast empire stretches out itself. Above him all is his; beneath him many a step are angels, and they are his; and they cast their crowns before his feet. With them stand his elect and ransomed, and *their* crowns too are his. And here upon this lower earth stand his saints, and they are his, and they adore him; and under the earth, among the infernals, where devils growl their malice, even there is trembling and adoration; and where lost spirits, with wailing and gnashing of teeth, forever lament their being, even there there is the acknowledgment of his Godhead,

even though the confession helps to make the fire of their torment. In heaven, in earth, in hell, all knees bend before him, and every tongue confesses that he is God. If not now, yet in the time that is to come, this shall be carried out, that every creature of God's making shall acknowledge his Son to be "God over all, blessed forever. Amen." O! my soul anticipates that blessed day, when this whole earth shall bend its knee before its God willingly! I do believe there is a happy era coming, when there shall not be one knee unbent before my Lord and Master. I look for that time, that latter-day glory, when kings shall bring presents, when queens shall be the nursing-mothers of the church, when the gold of Sheba, and the ships of Tarshish, and the dromedaries of Arabia shall alike be his, when nations and tribes of every tongue shall

> "Dwell on his name with sweetest song,
> And infant voices shall proclaim
> Their early blessings on his name."

Sometimes I hope to live to see that all-auspicious era—that halcyon age of this world, so much oppressed with grief and sorrow by the tyranny of its own inhabitants. I hope to see the time, when it shall be said, "Shout, for the great Shepherd reigns, and his unsuffering kingdom now is come"—when earth shall be one great orchestra of praise, and every man shall sing the glorious hallelujah anthem of the King of kings. But even now, while waiting for that era, my soul rejoices in the fact, that every knee does virtually bow, though not willingly, yet really. Does the scoffer, when he mouths high heaven, think that he insults God? He thinks so, but his insult dies long ere it reaches half-way to the stars. Does he conceive, when in his malice he forges a sword against Christ, that his weapon shall prosper? If he does, I can well conceive the derision of God, when he sees the wildest rebel, the most abandoned despiser, still working out his great decrees, still doing that which God hath eternally ordained, and in the midst of his wild rebellion still running in the very track which in some mysterious way from before all eternity had been marked as the track in which that being should certainly

move. "The wild steeds of earth have broken their bridles, the reins are out of the hands of the charioteer"—so some say; but they are not, or if they are, the steeds run the same round as they would have done had the Almighty grasped the reins still. The world has not gone to confusion; chance is not God; God is still Master, and let men do what they will, and hate the truth we now prize, they shall after all do what God wills, and their direst rebellion shall prove but a species of obedience, though they know it not.

But thou wilt say, "Why dost thou yet find fault; for who hath resisted such a will as that?" "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Who is he that shall blame him? Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! He is God—know that, ye inhabitants of the land; and all things, after all, shall serve his will. I like what Luther says in his bold hymn, where, notwithstanding all that those who are haters of predestination choose to affirm, he knew and boldly declared, "He everywhere hath sway, and all things serve his might." Notwithstanding all they do, there is God's sway, after all. Go on, reviler! God knoweth how to make all thy revilings into songs! Go on, thou warrior against God, if thou wilt; know this, thy sword shall help to magnify God, and carve out glory for Christ, when thou thoughtest the slaughter of his church. It shall come to pass that all thou dost shall be frustrated; for God maketh the diviners mad, and saith, "Where is the wisdom of the scribe? Where is the wisdom of the wise?" Surely "Him hath God exalted, and given him a name which is above every name."

And now, lastly, beloved, if it be true, as it is, that Christ is so exalted that he is to have a name above every name, and every knee is to bow to him, will we not bow our knees this

morning before his Majesty? You must, whether you will or no, one day bow your knee. O, iron-sinewed sinner, bow thy knee now! Thou wilt have to bow it, man, in that day when the lightnings shall be loosed, and the thunders shall roll in wild fury: thou wilt have to bow thy knee then. O, bow it now! "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." O Lord of hosts! bend the knees of men! Make us all the willing subjects of thy grace, lest afterward we should be the unwilling slaves of thy terror; dragged with chains of vengeance down to hell. O that now those that are on earth might willingly bend their knees, lest in hell it should be fulfilled, "Things under the earth shall bow the knee before him."

God bless you, my friends; I can say no more but that. God bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON X.

THE SAINT'S HERITAGE AND WATCHWORD.

'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—ISAIAH, liv. 17.

THIS is the fifth of November, a day very notable in English history. The events which transpired on it ought never to be forgotten. On this memorable day, the Catholics, foiled in all their schemes for crushing our glorious Protestantism, devised a plot horrible and diabolical enough to render them for ever hateful among upright men. The vast Armada of Spain on which they had relied, had been by the breath of God scattered and given to destruction, and now the cowardly traitors attempted by the foulest means the end which they could not accomplish by open warfare. Under the Houses of Parliament the deadly powder was concealed which they hoped would be a death-blow to both Houses, and so annihilate the power of Protestantism; but God looked from heaven, he confounded their knavish tricks, he laid their secrets bare, and discovered their treachery. Hallelujah to the King immortal, invisible, who guarded us, and guards us still from the devices of Rome and hell. Praise to his name, we are free from the Pope of Rome, to whom

"Britons never will be slaves."

"While for our princes they prepare,
In caverns deep a burning snare,
He shot from heaven a piercing ray,
And the dark treachery brought to day."

Nor is this the only event for which the fifth of November

is notable, for in 1688, we as a nation experienced a deliverance equally as great. James II. had attempted to revive the dying cause of Popery, and the hopes of Satan were great. But sturdy Protestants would not easily lose their dear-bought liberties, and, therefore, brought about the glorious revolution by which King William III. ascended the throne, and from him the succession has been happily continued until the reign of our Queen, for whom our earnest prayers shall rise.

> "Such great deliverance God hath wrought,
> And down to us salvation brought,
> And still the care of guardian heaven,
> Secures the bliss itself has given."

Blessed be God that on this fifth of November we can record such deliverances! Our Puritan forefathers never suffered this day to pass over without a commemoration service. So far from this day being forgotten, it ought to be remembered, not by the saturnalia of striplings, but by the songs of saints. I think I have in my possession now a record of sermons preached on the fifth of November by Matthew Henry. Many divines of his time regularly preached on this day. I think the true Protestant feeling of this country, which has lately so revived, and which has shown itself so strongly, will scarcely forgive me, if I do not this morning return most humble and hearty thanks to that God who has delivered us from the curse, and enabled us to stand as Protestant men free to preach the gospel of Christ.

I notice in my text two things this morning—the first is, *the saint's heritage;* the second, *the saint's watchword.*

First, *the saint's heritage*—"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord;" and then comes *the saint's watchword*—"Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Now, do not suppose that this morning I shall either have time, or opportunity, or talents, or power, to enter into an investigation of all the saint's heritages, especially when you remember that "all things are ours"—the gift of God, the

purchase of the Saviour's blood; so that time would fail us to talk of the possessions of the child of God. This world is his; earth is his lodge, and heaven his home. This life is his, with all its sorrows and its joys; death is his, with all its terrors and solemn realities; and eternity is his, with all its immortality and its grandeur. God is his, with all his attributes. The saint has a prospective right to every thing. God hath made him the heir of all things; for we are co-heirs with Christ, and joint-heirs with the Son of God. O, we have not time enough in the term of seventy years to read over once the fair inventory of the saint's possessions. If we could read it over once, there would be such a depth unfathomable, such a height immeasurable, such an intensity of value, such a depth of preciousness, that we should need to read it over an eternal number of times before we should ever be able to comprehend the love of God. So, then, you see I am not about to enter into the heritage of God's people at large; but I am going to speak of one peculiar item of that bright heritage as mentioned in my text; and that is *preservation*. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

I shall speak of this as being the heritage, not only of the church at large, but the personal and particular possession of every true believer, and every elect child of God.

First, then, there is the promise that we shall have protection against the *hand* of men: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Satan has always used the hand of man against the church of Christ. The weapon of physical force has ever been brought to bear against the church of God. From the day when first Cain with his club struck his brother Abel and laid him low, down to the time Zacharias the son of Barachias—from that time until now, the weapon has been constantly used against the church of God. There has never been a time when a weapon has not been forged against the church of Christ. Yea, even at the present moment, as I stand here, and with the eye of fancy survey our world, I see a fire blazing—fierce is the flame and high its pile of fuel. I see a monarch forging a weapon; a crowned tyrant

longs to bring forth chains of iron for the liberties of Europe, and smaller despots long to destroy the germ of all true liberty, the glorious gospel of the blessed God. I see the armies ready against the Lord of hosts, ready to do battle against the servants of God.* Still here is the sweet comfort; they may forge the weapon; they may fashion the sword; they may shut the prison door; they may confine the prisoners they may make their instruments of torture; but they can not prosper; for God hath said it: He "breaketh the bow; and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire." "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." He will not have it so.

Let us just look back through history, and see how God has fulfilled this gracious promise to his church in past days. He has done it sometimes in this way. He has not allowed the sword so much as to touch his church. At other times he has suffered the sword to do its work; and yet out of evil he hath brought forth good. Sometimes no weapon that has been formed against the church has prospered, because God has not suffered it so much as to touch the church. Look at many cases of history. There is the overthrow of Pharaoh. Look yonder, there he is at the head of all the chivalry of Egypt pursuing the chosen race. The sea divides to give refuge to the Lord's elect. Lo, they tread the pebbly bottom of the sea of Edom, while the waters stand like walls of snow-white crystal on the right and on the left. But the impious monarch, all unawed by this mighty marvel, shouts, "On, on, soldiers of Memphis! do ye fear to tread where slaves are bold?" See, they boldly dash between the watery heights; chariot and horse are in the sea, madly pursuing Israel. Ho, Israel! fear not the uplifted spear, dread not the rattling chariot; they are marching to their tombs, their weapons shall not prosper. Moses uplifts the rod of God, the parted floods embrace with eager joy, and grasp the helpless foe within their arms.

"Over horse and over car,
Over every man of war,

* Singularly enough, the battle of Inkerman was at this moment raging, November 5, 1854.

Over Pharaoh's crown of gold
The loud thundering billows rolled.
'Mid the water dark and dread,
Down they sank, they sank like lead!"

Again, my brethren, behold another glorious proof of the promise. Haman had conceived a hatred to Mordecai, and for his sake the whole race of the Jews must perish. How deep he lays his plots, how readily he obtains the consent of the king, how sure is he of revenge. Even now in imagination he sees Mordecai swinging on the lofty gallows, and all his kindred given to slaughter. Ah, thou enemy, delight in thine imagination, for it shall be disappointed; rejoice in thy design, but it shall be utterly confounded. There is a God in the courts of heaven, and an Esther in the palace of Shushan. Thou thyself shalt be hanged on thine own gallows, and the race of David shall revenge the deed of the Agagite upon his sons. O, Israel, well mayest thou rejoice at the feast of Purim, for the weapon of the mighty is broken. Nor here alone can we see the promise fulfilled; for time would fail me to tell of conquered Amalek and routed Midian. Scarce can we speak of Philistia and her giants given to the beasts of prey, or Edom slaughtered by the sword. Let the armies witness who fled at the fancied rumbling of chariots, or that host who in one night became the inhabitants of the realms of death. Let the warriors who rest with their rusted swords beneath their earthy pillows rise from their long sleep and confess the futility of their efforts; yea, let monarchs now in the chains of hell bear witness to their own utter confusion when the Lord appeared in battle for his chosen. March on, despot; bid thy slaves rise against the free, crush the helpless, and usurp the dominions of thy neighbor; but know that the Lord is mightier than thou. Thy northern hordes are not invincible; and Britons, with the help of God, shall teach thee that in vain thou liftest the hand of robbery. Thou contendest with a nation in whose midst the elect of God are praying against thee, and thou shalt know that God has said unto her holy seed, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper."

But now another view of the subject presents itself. Sometimes God has suffered the enemy to exact upon us, and the

sword has been used with terrible effect. O, there have been dark and gloomy days for the chosen church of Christ! When persecution has cried, "Havoc, and let slip the dogs of war," blood has flowed like water over the land! our enemies have triumphed. The martyr was bound to the stake, or was crucified upon the tree; the pastor was cut off, and the flocks were scattered. Cruel torture—awful suffering was endured by the saints of God. The elect cried, and said, "O Lord, how long? let it repent thee concerning thy servants." The enemy laughed, and said, "Ah, ah! so would we have it." Zion was under a cloud. Her precious saints, comparable to fine gold, were esteemed as earthen vessels, the work of the hands of the potter, and her princes were trodden down like mire in the streets. O, my soul! how was it in that sad day, when the enemy came in upon her like a flood, and she could scarcely lift up the standard of the Lord against him? O God, there was an hour when thou wouldst not hear the cry of thine elect! It seemed as if thine ear was deaf; the plaint of the widow was unheeded; the groans, the agonies, and the cries of martyrs were unnoticed; and thou didst still allow the enemy to vex thy children. Persecution shook the land, and sent forth its burning lava of cruelty, devastating the fair fields of the church of God. But did the enemy prosper? Did he succeed? Did persecution destroy his church? Did the weapon formed against us prosper? No! Each time that the church had a wave pass over her she rose out of it, and lifted her fair countenance, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. She was all the more glorious for it all. Every time her blood was shed each drop became a man, and each man thus converted stood prepared to pour out the vital current from his veins to defend the cause. Ah! those were times when, instead of the church being diminished and brought low, God did multiply her, and persecution worked for her good instead of causing her evil. The persecutor did not destroy the church. Christ's church never sails so well as when she is rocked from side to side by the winds of persecution; when the spray of her blood dashes in the front, and when at every lurch she is well-nigh overwhelmed

Nothing has helped God's church so much as persecution; it has increased, and been strengthened by it.

You will remember that this is not only the heritage of the church at large, but of every individual believer. And now I can speak to some poor souls who are in this place of worship O brother! O sister! there is a word for thee this morning. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." There are some dear sisters who come into this house of prayer under fear of brutal husbands—others, sons and daughters who have cruel fathers. I know there are some here who meet with dire and terrible persecution because they come to the house of God. O, little do some of us know when we meet here what our next neighbor on the seat has had to suffer to come up to this house! "I could a tale unfold would ruffle up your spirits"—a tale of persecution endured by some of the saints of God in this place. This is a word for you: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." The blow of a brutal husband shall not injure you; it may injure your body, but it can not injure your soul. "Fear not them that kill the body, and afterward have no more that they can do, but fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell." Why should you fear? God is on your side. Remember, Christ has said, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad when they say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Rejoice, and leap for joy, for great shall be your reward in heaven." Hold on, young man; hold on, young woman; still continue in the fear of God, and you shall find that persecution shall work for your good. But mark thee, persecutor, if thou art here this morning, there is a chain in hell of hot iron that shall be bound around thy waist; there are fiends that have whips of fire, and they shall scourge thy soul throughout eternity, because thou darest to put a stumbling-block in the way of God's children. Remember what Scripture saith: "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea."

The second portion of the heritage is, "Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn"

Here is a protection from the tongue of men. Satan leaves no stone unturned against the church of God. He uses not simply the hand, but, what is oftener a harder weapon, the tongue. We can bear a blow sometimes, but we can not endure an insult. There is a great power in the tongue. We can rise from a blow which laid us low on the ground; but we can not so easily recover from slander; that lays the character low. "Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." Look at the church at large and see how she has condemned her adversaries. When first she came into the world, she had to oppose Judaism; but she has condemned it, and its doctrines are now effete: then up started philosophers, and said it was foolishness, because they found nothing of worldly wisdom in it. But what has become of the philosopher now? Where is the stoic who boasted of his wisdom? Where the Epicurean who lectured in the streets of Greece? Where are they now? They are gone, and their names are only used as words that were—as things that have ceased to be—as figures of antiquity. Then Satan invented Mohammedanism in order to oppose the truth; but where is that? We have condemned it long ago. It is now a bloated carcass, almost without life, not able to stand. The cross has made the crescent wane. Where are the various systems of infidelity which have arisen one after another? They are gone quite out of sight. Now and then we felt rather alarmed; because we heard that some great people were going to prove that the Bible was not true, and our creed was not sound.

I remember talking with an old man once: "Ah," said he, "sir, this geology will quite ruin man's belief in the Bible." But where is geology now? Instead of opposing the gospel, it furnishes many powerful confirmations of the facts of revelation. Each one of the sciences has, in its imperfect condition, been used as a battering-ram against the truth of God; but as soon as it has been understood it has been made a pillar in Zion's outworks. Fear not, O son of God, that the perversions of men of science can damage our cause. Lying tongues we shall condemn. O infidelity! abortion of the night! thou hast been condemned a thousand times. Thou art a Protean creature,

changing thy shape as ages change. Once thou wast a laughing idiotic plaything for Voltaire; then a bullying blasphemer with Tom Paine; then a cruel, blood-drinking fiend, fit mate for Robespierre; anon, a speculating theorist with Owen; and now a worldly, gross, secularizing thing for impious lecturers and profane admirers. I fear thee not, infidelity; thou art an asp, biting at iron, spending thy spleen, and breaking thy fangs. My friends, did you ever walk the centuries, and mark the rise and fall of various empires of unbelief? If so, you will seem to be on a battle-field, and you see corpses; you ask the name of the dead, and some one replies, that is the corpse of such a system, and that the carcase of such a theory; and, mark you, as surely as time rolls on, the now rampant style of infidelity will perish, and, in fifty years, we shall see the skeleton of an exploded scheme, and of its admirers the epitaph will be, "Here lies a fool, called of old, a secularist." Now, what shall we say of Mormonism, the haggard superstition of the West; or of Puseyism, the express image of Popery; or of Socinian and Arian heresies, of Arminian perversions, or of Antinomian abuse? What shall we say of each, but that their death-knell shall soon toll, and these children of hell shall sink back to their birth-place in the pit. And you old and crazy church upon the seven hills has dared to hurl its anathemas at the saints of the Lord. Still doth she hold the wine-cup of abomination; still is she robed in scarlet, and her sway is over many waters; but she shall be condemned in judgment. Lo, the millstone in the hand of the archangel hastens to its fall, and Babylon the Great shall perish with a terrible overthrow. Shout, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it; sing, O ye inhabitants of the earth, for the promise is accomplished, and every opposing tongue is condemned.

Now, I wish to make this a personal heritage of each child of God—"every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn." O! what a sweet thought that is for me, for there are many tongues busy about me. Some say, "He is a good man;" others say, "He is deceiving the people." Well, if God will convert more sinners, and bring more to his church, they may decide which way they like. I

am not careful to answer any of the self-thought infallible in this matter. You never knew of a preacher who gathers a crowd, or who is doing any good, but he is sure to be slandered, and vilified, and so on; but here is a promise—"Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." We can afford a little slander, because we know we shall have all the more to condemn. The more accusers, the more acquittals; the more slander, so much the more honor of God: so the enemy may just slander still for what we care; for "every tongue that shall rise against us in judgment we shall condemn."

But I know that there are some of my hearers who believe and love the doctrines of grace; and sometimes you are called to dispute and contend for them. I know you are; I trust you are; I hope you love to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." I know what is the case with many of you: when you come to plead with an infidel you do not know what to say. Has it not been so with you many a time? You have said, "I almost wish I could hold my tongue, for the man has confounded me;" yet remember, "Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." Last time you had that dispute, you thought your adversary conquered, did you not? You thought wrong. He might glory in his intellectual prowess. He might say, "Oh, that man is nothing to me." But leave him alone till he gets to bed; and when the hours of darkness are around him, he will seriously begin to think. He conquered you in appearance; but now you master him. Wait till he is sick, and then your words shall ring in his ears; they shall come up again from the grave if he should survive you, and you will conquer him then. Do not be afraid to argue for the truth. Do not think that infidels are wise men; or Arminians are so exceedingly learned. Stand up for the truth; and there is so much solid learning and real truth to be found in the doctrines that we uphold, that none of you need be ashamed of them. They are mighty and must prevail. The mighty God of Jacob, by the demonstration of the Holy Ghost, makes them triumphant.

There is one that has risen against me in judgment many times, and I dare say he has troubled many of the dear people

of the Lord here—that is Satan. He is always rising in judgment against us. Whenever we get into a little trouble, he comes and says, "You are no saint." If we commit a sin—"You would not sin like that, if you had been a child of God; you have no interest in the covenant; you are an enthusiast; you have deceived yourself." How many times Satan has risen against me in judgment—so risen that I have been fool enough to heed what he said. I have told him sometimes, "You are a liar, and the father of lies;" but at other times I have believed his malicious accusation. O, it is no easy thing to stand against the insinuations of the evil one. You, my brethren, are not strangers to his devices. He has set conscience at you, the hell-hounds of legal convictions howled upon you, and the drum of terrible doom thundered in your ears; then up stood the fiend himself and denied your union with Jesus, claiming you as his own prey and portion. Ah, how glorious the moment when our Advocate entered the forum of conscience, and assured us that he had pleaded our cause in the court of King's Bench above. And, oh, when he showed us the adversary's brief, spoiled by the nails of the cross, we felt that the tongue of Satan was condemned, and his calumnies hushed. Glorious Councillor, all praise to thine adorable name. Let the saints know also that they shall soon have a yet more public triumph over their cruel enemy. At the day of judgment, the foe of God and man shall be dragged from his cell, shall lift his brazen front with thunder scarred, receive his sentence, and begin a hell more terrible than all he has endured before. O saint, dost thou know that thou shalt judge him? Know you not that you shall judge angels? You, sons of God, shall sit as assessors with the firstborn Son, and when he shall pronounce the doom of the dragon, you shall solemnly say "Amen" to the sentence. Rejoice, O poor tried one; thou shalt tread upon the lion and the dragon, thy foot shall be upon the head of thine enemy, and thou shalt know that the promise is fulfilled in thine own experience—"Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

But now, beloved, I have spoken sufficiently for the present on this glorious heritage of the saints of God. The weapons

are not to prosper, and the tongues are to be condemned. Now we must close up with the watchword of the saints. What is that? "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." In ancient times, if not at present, armies used to have their watchwords, by which they might recognize one another in the dark. We want a watchword now. It is very difficult to tell the children of God unless we have certain signs. God himself gives us the watchword. "Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." You can always tell a saint of God by this watchword. If he says, "My righteousness is of God," you may safely believe that he is a disciple of Jesus Christ. If he does not understand our shibboleth, he may not have lived in that country where they speak the pure language of Canaan, and that may excuse defects in his language. He may differ from us in some points, but if he sincerely says, "My righteousness is of God," you may safely conclude that he is not an enemy of truth. I mean "THE TRUTH as it is in Jesus."

We may understand this watchword in two senses. It may mean Christian justification in the eyes of the world is of God; and again, their righteousness and salvation is of God. O, there is to be a time when God's children shall come out clear of all slander, when falsehood shall be swept away, and they shall stand forth justified even by their enemies. Their slanderers shall have nothing to say against them. They shall share in the admiration which an assembled universe shall be constrained to give to him who doeth all things well. But this vindication will not be brought about by their own efforts. They have not been anxious to avoid reproach for Christ's sake. They have not wept and bemoaned themselves because they were counted the offscouring of all things. No; their righteousness, their entire clearing from the aspersions of malice and the calumnies of envy will come from Jehovah. The escutcheon of the church is in the Lord's hands, and he will wipe away all her defilement. The character of the saints God himself shall vindicate, and all liars shall have their portion in the lake of fire and brimstone. Let this be the pennon on our lance; let this be our cheering watchword, our vindication—"Our righteousness is of the Lord." Now for the

second meaning: "Their justifying righteousness is of me," saith the Lord.

Now, if I wished to test you all, and might ask you only one question, I would ask this: What is your righteousness? Now come along in single file. What is your righteousness? O, I am as good as my neighbors. Go along with you; you are ot my comrade. What is *your* righteousness? Well, I am rather better than my neighbors, for I go to chapel regularly. Off with you, sir; you do not know the watchword And you next; *what* is *your* righteousness? I have been baptized, and am a member of the church. Yes, and so you may; and if that is your hope, you are in the gall of bitterness. Now, you next; what is your hope? O, I do all I can, and Christ makes up the rest. Rubbish! You are a Babylonian, you are no Israelite: Christ is no make-weight—away with you. Here comes the last. What is your righteousness? My righteousness is filthy rags, except one righteousness which I have, which Christ wrought out for me on Calvary, imputed to me by God himself, which makes me pure and spotless as an angel. Ah, brother, you and I are fellow-soldiers: I have found you out; that is the watchword. "Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." I do not ask whether you are Churchmen, or whether you are Methodists, or Independents, or Baptists, if you do but know this watchword—"Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." I can forgive all those other minor things, if you can sing—

> "Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
> My beauty are, my glorious dress."

Tell me you have got any other trust, and I will have nothing o do with you. Tell me you can work out your own salvation, nd I will not acknowledge you for a brother. But if you tell me that from first to last you rely on Jesus, then I acknowledge you as a fellow-soldier; and I am glad to see you wherever I meet you.

But to wind up; we have had the heritage of the saints, and we have had the watchword of the saints. What next shall we say? We will say, how well God has kept his promise. Has he not? You must know that it is just 249

years ago—it will be 250 next year—the fifth jubilee—since under the Parliament-house the train was laid, and the gunpowder ready, to blow up the House of Lords and Commons, and utterly to destroy the nation. Ah, this night 249 years ago, how Satan gloated on the thought that he should destroy the church, and exalt his darlings to honors in the place of those who loved the Lord. Where are their mighty men? O! they said, the foundations will be removed; and what will the righteous do? They thought that surely their end would be accomplished. But how sadly were they disappointed! They were discovered. Down went the soldiers, and found out the plot; and Popery has been prevented from spreading throughout Great Britain. O, blessed be the name of the Lord! "no weapon that is formed against the church shall prosper." We glory because we can put our finger upon history and exclaim, God is true, and events are witnesses of his faithfulness.

O beloved, has the Holy Ghost given you an inwrought knowledge of the truth of this word of God? Have you experienced blessed deliverances from the right hand of the Most High? Many of you, I fear, have neither part nor lot in this matter, and you have true cause to lament your terrible loss in being unable to grasp these covenant blessings. But some of us may now anticipate the hour when we shall obtain complete redemption with all the blood-bought family; and then, ah, then, how shall we with rapture review delivering grace in all its thousand instances! Hark! hark! methought I heard sweet music; methought I heard a song descending from the regions up above, borne down by gales whose breath is sweet as that which comes from the spicy groves of Araby. I hear a sound not earthly: it is, it must be celestial, for no mortal sonnets can with these compare. O river of harmony! where are the lips from which thou flowest? The heavens are opened; I see a host in white robes, with crowns upon their heads, and palm-branches in their hands. Who are these? whence come they? These are they who have passed through much tribulation. We have whitened our robes in the blood of the Lamb; therefore we are without fault before the throne of God, and we serve him

day and night in his temple. Holy ones, repeat the song; saints of God, re-echo the chorus; repeat it yet again, that these ears may hear it. What do you sing? "No weapon that is formed against us hath prospered; every tongue that hath risen against us in judgment we have condemned." This is the heritage—"Our righteousness is of the Lord." Farewell, saints of God! Now, saints below, take up the train, and sing it by holy, faithful, confident anticipation

> "No weapon hath prospered, the foe is o'ercome;
> No tongue hath succeeded, the wise ones are dumb;
> The Lord is our glory, and each of the host
> Shall yet shout hosannah on Canaan's fair coast."

Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, world without end men.

SERMON XI.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

"But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?"—Job, xxxv. 10.

Elihu was a wise man, exceeding wise, though not as wise as the all-wise Jehovah, who sees light in the clouds, and finds order in confusion; hence Elihu, being much puzzled at beholding Job thus afflicted, cast about him to find the cause of it, and he very wisely hit upon one of the most likely reasons, although it did not happen to be the right one in Job's case. He said within himself—"Surely, if men be tried and troubled exceedingly, it is because, while they think about their troubles and distress themselves about their fears, they do not say, 'Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?'" Elihu's reason was very right in the majority of cases. The great cause of the Christian's distress, the reason of the depths of sorrow into which many believers are plunged, is simply this—that while they are looking about, on the right hand and on the left, to see how they may escape their troubles, they forget to look to the hills whence all real help cometh; they do not say, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" We shall, however, leave that inquiry, and dwell upon those sweet words, "God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night."

The world hath its night. It seemeth necessary that it should have one. The sun shineth by day, and men go forth to their labors; but they grow weary, and nightfall cometh on, like a sweet boon from heaven. The darkness draweth the curtains, and shutteth out the light, which might prevent our eyes from slumber; while the sweet, calm stillness of the

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night permits us to rest upon the lap of ease, and there forget awhile our cares, until the morning sun appeareth, and an angel puts his hand upon the curtain, and undraws it once again, touches our eyelids, and bids us rise, and proceed to the labors of the day. Night is one of the greatest blessings men enjoy; we have many reasons to thank God for it. Yet night is to many a gloomy season. There is "the pestilence that walketh in darkness;" there is "the terror by night;" there is the dread of robbers and of fell disease, with all those fears that the timorous know, when they have no light wherewith they can discern objects. It is then they fancy that spiritual creatures walk the earth; though, if they knew rightly, they would find it to be true, that

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth,
> Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake,"

and that at all times they are round about us—not more by night than by day. Night is the season of terror and alarm to most men. Yet even night hath its songs. Have you never stood by the seaside at night, and heard the pebbles sing, and the waves chant God's glories? Or have you never risen from your couch, and thrown up the window of your chamber, and listened there? Listened to what? Silence—save now and then a murmuring sound, which seems sweet music then. And have you not fancied that you heard the harp of God playing in heaven? Did you not conceive, that you stars, that those eyes of God, looking down on you, were also mouths of song—that every star was singing God's glory, singing, as it shone, its mighty Maker, and his lawful, well-deserved praise? Night hath its songs. We need not much poetry in our spirit, to catch the song of night, and hear the spheres as they chant praises which are loud to the heart, though they be silent to the ear—the praises of the mighty God, who bears up the unpillared arch of heaven, and moves the stars in their courses.

Man, too, like the great world in which he lives, must have his night. For it is true that man is like the world around him; he is a little world; he resembles the world in almost every thing; and if the world hath its night, so hath man.

And many a night do we have—nights of sorrow, nights of persecution, nights of doubt, nights of bewilderment, nights of anxiety, nights of oppression, nights of ignorance—nights of all kinds, which press upon our spirits and terrify our souls. But, blessed be God, the Christian man can say, "My God giveth me songs in the night."

It is not necessary, I take it, to prove to you that Christian men have nights; for if you are Christians, you will find that *you* have them, and you will not want any proof, for nights will come quite often enough. I will, therefore, proceed at once to the subject; and I will speak this evening upon songs in the night, *their source*—God giveth them; songs in the night, *their matter*—what do we sing about in the night? songs in the night, *their excellence*—they are hearty songs, and they are sweet ones; songs in the night, *their uses*—their benefits to ourselves and others.

I. First, songs in the night—WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THEM? "*God*," says the text, our "Maker:" *he* "giveth songs in the night."

Any fool can sing in the day. When the cup is full, man draws inspiration from it; when wealth rolls in abundance around him, any man can sing to the praise of a God who gives a plenteous harvest, or sends home a loaded argosy. It is easy enough for an Æolian harp to whisper music when the winds blow; the difficulty is for music to come when no wind bloweth. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by—who sings from his heart, and not from a book that he can see, because he has no means of reading, save from that inward book of his own living spirit, whence notes of gratitude pour out in songs of praise. No man can make a song in the night himself; he may attempt it, but he will feel how difficult it is. Let all things go as I please—I will weave songs, weave them wherever I go, with the flowers that grow upon my path; but put me in a desert, where no flowers are, and wherewith shall I weave a chorus of praise to God? How shall I make a crown for him? Let this voice be free, and this body be full of

health, and I can sing God's praise; but stop this tongue, lay me upon the bed of languishing, and it is not so easy to sing from the bed, and chant high praises in the fires. Give me the bliss of spiritual liberty, and let me mount up to my God, get near the throne, and I will sing, ay, sing as sweet as seraphs; but confine me, fetter my spirit, clip my wings, make me exceeding sad, so that I become old like the eagle—ah! then it is hard to sing. It is not in man's power to sing, when all is adverse. It is not natural to sing in trouble—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name:" for that is a daylight song. But it was a divine song which Habakkuk sang, when in the night he said—"Though the fig-tree shall not blossom," and so on, "yet will I trust in the Lord, and stay myself in the God of Jacob." Methinks in the Red Sea any man could have made a song like that of Moses—"The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea;" the difficulty would have been, to compose a song before the Red Sea had been divided, and to sing it before Pharaoh's hosts had been drowned, while yet the darkness of doubt and fear was resting on Israel's hosts. Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of man.

But what does the text mean, when it asserts that God giveth songs in the night? We think we find two answers to the question. The first is, that usually in the night of a Christian's experience *God is his only song.* If it be daylight in my heart, I can sing songs touching my graces—songs touching my sweet experience—songs touching my duties—songs touching my labors; but let the night come—my graces appear to have withered; my evidences, though they are there, are hidden; I can not

> "read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies;"

and now I have nothing left to sing of but my God. It is strange, that when God gives his children mercies, they generally set their hearts more on the mercies than on the Giver of them; but when the night comes, and he sweeps all the mercies away, then at once they say, "Now, my God, I have

nothing to sing of but thee; I must come to thee; and to thee only. I had cisterns once; they were full of water; I drank from them then; but now the created streams are dry; sweet Lord, I quaff no stream but thine own self, I drink from no fount but from thee." Ay, child of God, thou knowest what I say; or if thou dost not understand it yet, thou wilt do so by-and-by. It is in the night we sing of God, and of God alone. Every string is tuned, and every power hath its attribute to sing, while we praise God, and nothing else. We can sacrifice to ourselves in daylight—we only sacrifice to God by night; we can sing high praises to our dear selves when all is joyful, but we can not sing praise to any save our God, when circumstances are untoward, and providences appear adverse. God alone can furnish us with songs in the night.

And yet again: not only does God give the song in the night, because he is the only subject upon which we can sing then, but because *he is the only one who inspires songs in the night.* Bring me up a poor, melancholy, distressed child of God: I come into the pulpit, I seek to tell him sweet promises, and whisper to him sweet words of comfort; he listeneth not to me; he is like the deaf adder, he listens not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Send him round to all the comforting divines, and all the holy Barnabases that ever preached, and they will do very little—they will not be able to squeeze a song out of him, do what they may. He is drinking the gall of wormwood; he says, "O Lord, thou hast made me drunk with weeping, I have eaten ashes like bread;" and comfort him as you may, it will be only a woeful note or two of mournful resignation that you will get from him; you will get no psalms of praise, no hallelujahs, no sonnets. But let God come to his child in the night, let him whisper in his ear as he lies on his bed, and how you see his eyes flash fire in the night! Do you not hear him say,

> "'Tis paradise, if thou art here;
> If thou depart, 'tis hell."

I could not have cheered him: it is God that has done it; and God "giveth songs in the night." It is marvelous, brethren, how one sweet word of God will make whole songs

for Christians. One word of God is like a piece of gold, and the Christian is the gold-beater, and he can hammer that promise out for whole weeks. I can say myself, I have lived on one promise for weeks, and want no other. I want just simply to hammer that promise out into gold-leaf, and plate my whole existence with joy from it. The Christian gets his songs from God: God gives him inspiration, and teaches him how to sing: "God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night."

So, then, poor Christian, thou needest not go pumping up thy poor heart to make it glad. Go to thy Maker, and ask him to give thee a song in the night. Thou art a poor dry well: thou hast heard it said, that when a pump is dry, you must pour water down it first of all, and then you will get some up; and so, Christian, when thou art dry, go to God, ask him to pour some joy down thee, and then thou wilt get some joy up from thine own heart. Do not go to this comforter or that, for you will find them Job's comforters, after all; but go thou first and foremost to thy Maker, for he is the great composer of songs and teacher of music; he it is who can teach thee how to sing: "God, my Maker, who giveth me songs in the night."

II. Thus we have dwelt upon the first point. Now the second. WHAT IS GENERALLY THE MATTER CONTAINED IN A SONG IN THE NIGHT? What do we sing about?

Why, I think, when we sing by night, there are three things we sing about. Either we sing about the yesterday that is over, or else about the night itself, or else about the morrow that is to come. Each of these are sweet themes, when God our Maker gives us songs in the night. In the midst of the night the most usual method for Christians is to sing about *the day that is over*. "Well," they say, "it is night now, but I can remember when it was daylight. Neither moon nor stars appear at present; but I can remember when I saw the sun. I have no evidence just now; but there was a time when I could say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' I have my doubts and fears at this present moment; but it is not long since I could say, with full assurance, 'I know that he shed his blood for me; I know that my Redeemer liveth,

and when he shall stand a second time upon the earth, though the worms devour this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God.' It may be darkness now; but I know the promises *were* sweet; I know I had blessed seasons in his house. I am quite sure of this; I used to enjoy myself in the ways of the Lord; and though now my paths are strewn with thorns, I know it is the King's highway. It was a way of pleasantness once; it will be a way of pleasantness again. 'I will remember the days of old; I will meditate upon the years of the right hand of the Most High.'" Christian, perhaps the best song thou canst sing, to cheer thee in the night, is the song of yester-morn. Remember, it was not always night with thee: night is a new thing to thee. Once thou hadst a glad heart, a buoyant spirit; once thine eye was full of fire; once thy foot was light; once thou couldst sing for very joy and ecstacy of heart. Well, then, remember that God, who made thee sing yesterday, has not left thee in the night. He is not a daylight God, who can not know his children in darkness; but he loves thee now as much as ever: though he has left thee a little, it is to prove thee, to make thee trust him better, and serve him more. Let me tell you some of the sweet things of which a Christian may make a song when he is in the night.

If we are going to sing of the things of yesterday, let us begin with what God did for us in past times. My beloved brethren, you will find it a sweet subject for song at times, to begin to sing of electing love and covenanted mercies. When thou thyself art low, it is well to sing of the fountain head of mercy; of that blessed decree wherein thou wast ordained to eternal life, and of that glorious Man who undertook thy redemption; of that solemn covenant signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well; of that everlasting love which, ere the hoary mountains were begotten, or ere the aged hills were children, chose thee, loved thee firmly, loved thee fast, loved thee well, loved thee eternally. I tell thee, believer, if thou canst go back to the years of eternity; if thou canst in thy mind run back to that period, or ere the everlasting hills were fashioned, or the fountains of the great deep scooped out, and if thou canst see thy God inscribing thy name in his eternal book; if thou canst see in his loving

heart eternal thoughts of love to thee, thou wilt find this a charming means of giving thee songs in the night. No songs like those which come from electing love; no sonnets like those that are dictated by meditations on discriminating mercy. Some, indeed, can not sing of election: the Lord open their mouths a little wider! Some there are that are afraid of the very term; but we only despise men who are afraid of what they believe, afraid of what God has taught them in his Bible. No, in our darker hours it is our joy to sing:

"Sons we are through God's election,
Who in Jesus Christ believe;
By eternal destination,
Sovereign grace we now receive.
Lord, thy favor,
Shall both grace and glory give."

Think, Christian, of the yesterday, I say, and thou wilt get a song in the night. But if thou hast not a voice tuned to so high a key as that, let me suggest some other mercies thou mayest sing of; and they are the mercies thou hast experienced. What! man, canst thou not sing a little of that blessed hour when Jesus met thee; when, a blind slave, thou wast sporting with death, and he saw thee, and said: "Come, poor slave, come with me?" Canst thou not sing of that rapturous moment when he snapped thy fetters, dashed thy chains to the earth, and said: "I am the Breaker; I came to break thy chains, and set thee free?" What though thou art ever so gloomy now, canst thou forget that happy morning, when in the house of God thy voice was loud, almost as a seraph's voice, in praise? for thou couldst sing: "I am forgiven; I am forgiven:"

"A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood."

Go back, man; sing of that moment, and then thou wilt have a song in the night. Or if thou hast almost forgotten that, then sure thou hast some precious milestone along the road of life that is not quite grown over with moss, on which thou canst read some happy inscription of his mercy toward thee! What! didst thou never have a sickness like that which thou

art suffering now, and did he not raise thee up from that? Wast thou never poor before, and did he not supply thy wants? Wast thou never in straits before, and did he not deliver thee? Come, man! I beseech thee, go to the river of thine experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and weave them into an ark, wherein thine infant faith may float safely on the stream. I bid thee not forget what God hath done. What! hast thou buried thine own diary? I beseech thee, man, turn over the book of thy remembrance. Canst thou not see some sweet hill Mizar? Canst thou not think of some blessed hour when the Lord met with thee at Hermon? Hast thou never been on the Delectable Mountains? Hast thou never been fetched from the den of lions? Hast thou never escaped the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear? Nay, O man, I know thou hast; go back, then, a little way, and take the mercies of yesterday; and though it is dark now, light up the lamps of yesterday, and they shall glitter through the darkness, and thou shalt find that God hath given thee a song in the night.

"Ay," says one, "but you know, that when we are in the dark, we can not see the mercies God has given us. It is all very well for you to tell us this; but we can not get hold of them." I remember an old experimental Christian speaking about the great pillars of our faith; he was a sailor; we were then on board ship, and there were sundry huge posts on the shore, to which the ships were usually fastened, by throwing a cable over them. After I had told him a great many promises, he said, "I know they are good strong promises, but I can not get near enough to shore to throw my cable around them; that is the difficulty."

Now, it often happens that God's past mercies and loving kindnesses would be good sure posts to hold on to, but we have not got faith enough to throw our cable round them, and so we go slipping down the stream of unbelief, because we can not stay ourselves by our former mercies. I will, however, give you something that I think you can throw your cable over. If God has never been kind to you, one thing you surely know, and that is, he has been kind to others. Come, now; if thou art in ever so great straits, sure there were

others in greater straits. What! art thou lower down than poor Jonah was, when he went down to the bottoms of the mountains? Art thou more poorly off than thy Master, when he had not a place where to lay his head? What! conceivest thou thyself to be the worst of the worst? Look at Job there scraping himself with a potsherd, and sitting on a dunghill Art thou as bad as he? And yet Job rose up, and was richer than before; and out of the depths Jonah came, and preached the Word; and our Saviour Jesus hath mounted to his throne. O Christian! only think of what he has done for others! If thou canst not recollect that he has done any thing for thee, yet remember, I beseech thee, what his usual rule is, and do not judge hardly by my God. You remember Benhadad, when he was overcome and conquered, and Ahab was after him. Some said to him, "We know that the kings of Israel are merciful kings; let us send therefore unto Ahab, and it may be he will spare our lives." Benhadad sent to the king; he had received no kindness from Ahab before, he had only heard that he was a merciful king; so to the king he went; and what said the king? "Is my brother, Benhadad, yet alive?" Truly, poor soul, if thou hast never had a merciful God, yet others have had; the King is a merciful King; go and try him. If thou art ever so low in thy troubles, look to "the hills, from whence cometh thy help." Others have had help therefrom, and so mayest thou. Up might start hundreds of God's children, and show us their hands full of comforts and mercies; and they could say, "the Lord gave us these without money and without price; and why should he not give to thee also, seeing that thou also art a king's son?" Thus, Christian, thou wilt get a song in the night out of other people, if thou canst not get a song fom thyself. Never be ashamed of taking a leaf out of another man's experience book. If thou canst find no good leaf in thine own, tear one out of some one's else; and if thou hast no cause to be grateful to God in darkness, or canst not find cause in thine own experience, go to some one else, and, if thou canst, harp his praise in the dark, and like the nightingale sing his praise sweetly when all the world has gone to rest. We can sing in the night of the mercies of yesterday.

But I think, beloved, there is never so dark a night, but there is something to sing about, even *concerning that night;* for there is one thing I am sure we can sing about, let the night be ever so dark, and that is, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, and because his compassions fail not." If we can not sing very loud, yet we can sing a little low tune, something like this—"He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "O!" says one, "I do not know where to get my dinner from to-morrow. I am a poor wretch." So you may be, my dear friend; but you are not so poor as you deserve to be. Do not be mightily offended about that; if you are, you are no child of God; for the child of God acknowledges that he has no right to the least of God's mercies, but that they come through the channel of grace alone. As long as I am out of hell, I have no right to grumble; and if I were in hell I should have no right to complain, for I feel, when convinced of sin, that never creature deserved to go there more than I do. We have no cause to murmur; we can lift up our hands, and say, "Night! thou art dark, but thou mightst have been darker. I am poor, but if I could not have been poorer, I might have been sick. I am poor and sick—well, I have some friend left my lot can not be so bad, but it might have been worse." And therefore, Christian, you will always have one thing to sing about—"Lord, I thank thee, it is not all darkness!" Besides, Christian, however dark the night is, there is always a star or moon. There is scarce ever a night that we have, but there are just one or two little lamps burning up there. However dark it may be, I think you may find some little comfort, some little joy, some little mercy left, and some little promise to cheer thy spirit. The stars are not put out, are they? Nay, if thou canst not see them, they are there; but methinks one or two must be shining on thee; therefore give God a song in the night. If thou hast only one star, bless God for that one, perhaps he will make it two; and if thou hast only two stars, bless God twice for the two stars, and perhaps he will make them four. Try, then, if thou canst not find a song in the night.

But, beloved, there is another thing of which we can sing

yet more sweetly; and that is, we can sing of *the day that is to come.* I am preaching to-night for the poor weavers of Spitalfields. Perhaps there are not to be found a class of men in London who are suffering a darker night than they are; for while many classes have been befriended and defended, there are few who speak up for them, and (if I am rightly informed) they are generally ground down within an inch of their lives. I suppose their masters intend that their bread shall be very sweet, on the principle, that the nearer the ground, the sweeter the grass; for I should think no people have their grass so near the ground as the weavers of Spitalfields. In an inquiry by the House of Commons last week, it was given in evidence, that their average wages amount to seven or eight shillings a week; and then they have to furnish themselves with a room, and work at expensive articles, which my friends the ladies are wearing now, and which they buy as cheaply as possible; but perhaps they do not know that they are made with the blood and bones and marrow of the Spitalfields weavers, who, many of them, work for less than man ought to have to subsist upon. Some of them waited upon me the other day; I was exceedingly pleased with one of them. He said, "Well, sir, it is very hard, but I hope there is better times coming for us." "Well, my friend," I said, "I am afraid you can not hope for much better times, unless the Lord Jesus Christ comes a second time." "That is just what we hope for," said he. "We do not see there is any chance of deliverance, unless the Lord Jesus Christ comes to establish his kingdom upon earth; and then he will judge the oppressed, and break the oppressors in pieces with an iron rod, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." I was glad my friend had got a song in the night, and was singing about the morning that was coming. Often do I cheer myself with the thought of the coming of the Lord. We preach now, perhaps, with little success; "the kingdoms of this world" are not "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;" we send out missionaries; they are for the most part unsuccessful. We are laboring, but we do not see the fruit of our labors. Well, what then? Try a little while; we shall not always labor in vain, or spend our strength for naught. A day is coming, and now is, when every minister

of Christ shall speak with unction, when all the servants of God shall preach with power, and when colossal systems of heathenism shall tumble from their pedestals, and mighty, gigantic delusions shall be scattered to the winds. The shout shall be heard, "Alleluia! Alleluia! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." For that day do I look; it is to the bright horizon of that second coming that I turn my eyes. My anxious expectation is, that the sweet Sun of righteousness will arise with healing beneath his wings, that the oppressed shall be righted, that despotisms shall be cut down, that liberty shall be established, that peace shall be made lasting, and that the glorious liberty of the gospel of God shall be extended throughout the known world. Christian! if thou art in a night, think of the morrow; cheer up thy heart with the thought of the coming of thy Lord. Be patient, for

"Lo! he comes, with clouds descending."

Be patient! The husbandman waits until he reaps his harvest. Be patient; for you know who has said, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be."

One thought more upon that point. There is another sweet to-morrow of which we hope to sing in the night. Soon, beloved, you and I shall lie on our dying-bed, and we shall want a song in the night then; and I do not know where we shall get it, if we do not get it from the to-morrow. Kneeling by the bed of an apparently dying saint, last night, I said, "Well, sister, he has been precious to you; you can rejoice in his covenant mercies, and his past loving-kindnesses." She put out her hand, and said, "Ah! sir, do not talk about them now; I want the sinner's Saviour as much now as ever; it is not a saint's Saviour I want; it is still a sinner's Saviour that I am in need of, for I am a sinner still." I found that I could not comfort her with the past; so I reminded her of the golden streets, of the gates of pearl, of the walls of jasper, of the harps of gold, of the songs of bliss; and then her eye glistened; she said, "Yes, I shall be there soon; I shall meet them by-and-by;" and then she seemed so glad! Ah! believer, you may

always cheer yourself with that thought; for if you are ever so low now, remember that

> "A few more rolling suns, at most,
> Will land thee on fair Canaan's coast."

Thy head may be crowned with thorny troubles now, but it shall wear a starry crown directly; thy hand may be filled with cares—it shall grasp a harp soon, a harp full of music. Thy garments may be soiled with dust now; they shall be white by-and-by. Wait a little longer. Ah! beloved, how despicable our troubles and trials will seem when we look back upon them! Looking at them here in the prospect, they seem immense; but when we get to heaven, we shall then,

> "With transporting joys, recount
> The labors of our feet."

Our trials will seem to us nothing at all. We shall talk to one another about them in heaven, and find all the more to converse about, according as we have suffered more here below. Let us go on, therefore; and if the night be ever so dark, remember there is not a night that shall not have a morning; and that morning is to come by-and-by. When sinners are lost in darkness, *we* shall lift up our eyes in everlasting light. Surely I need not dwell longer on this thought. There is matter enough for songs in the night in the past, the present, and the future.

III. And now I want to tell you, very briefly, WHAT ARE THE EXCELLENCES OF SONGS IN THE NIGHT ABOVE ALL OTHER SONGS.

In the first place, when you hear a man singing a song in the night—I mean in the night of trouble—you may be quite sure it is *a hearty one.* Many of you sang very prettily just now, didn't you? I wonder whether you would sing very prettily, if there were a stake or two in Smithfield for all of you who dared to do it? If you sang under pain and penalty, that would show your heart to be in your song. We can all sing very nicely indeed when every body else sings. It is the easiest thing in the world to open your mouth, and let the words come out; but when the devil puts his hand over your mouth, can you sing then? Can you say, "Though he slay me, yet will I

trust in him?" That is hearty singing; that is real song that springs up in the night. The nightingale singeth most sweetly because she singeth in the night. We know a poet has said, that if she sang by day, she might be thought to sing no more sweetly than the wren. It is the stillness of the night that makes her song sweet. And so doth a Christian's song become sweet and hearty, because it is in the night.

Again: the songs we sing in the night will be *lasting*. Many songs we hear our fellow-creatures singing in the streets will not do to sing by-and-by; I guess they will sing a different kind of tune soon. They can sing now-a-days any rollicking, drinking songs; but they will not sing them when they come to die; they are not exactly the songs with which to cross Jordan's billows. It will not do to sing one of those light songs when death and you are having the last tug. It will not do to enter heaven singing one of those unchaste, unholy sonnets. No; but the Christian who can sing in the night will not have to leave off his song; he may keep on singing it forever. He may put his foot in Jordan's stream, and continue his melody; he may wade through it, and keep on singing still, and land himself safe in heaven; and when he is there, there need not be a gap in his strain, but in a nobler, sweeter strain, he may still continue singing his power to save. There are a great many of you that think Christian people are a very miserable set, don't you? You say, "Let me sing my song." Ay, but, my dear friends, we like to sing a song that will last; we don't like your songs; they are all froth, like bubbles on the breaker, and they will soon die away and be lost. Give me a song that will last; give me one that will not melt. O, give me not the dreamster's gold! he hoards it up, and says, "I'm rich;" and when he waketh, his gold is gone. But give me songs in the night, for they are songs I sing forever.

Again: the songs we warble in the night are those that show we have *real faith* in God. Many men have just enough faith to trust God as far as they can see him, and they always sing as far as they can see providence go right; but true faith can sing when its possessors can not see. It can take hold of God when they can not discern him.

Songs in the night, too, prove that we have *true courage* Many sing by day who are silent by night; they are afraid of thieves and robbers; but the Christian who sings in the night proves himself to be a courageous character. It is the bold Christian who can sing God's sonnets in the darkness.

He who can sing songs in the night, too, proves that he has *true love* to Christ. It is not love to Christ to praise him while every body else praises him; to walk arm in arm with him when he has the crown on his head is no great deed, I wot; to walk with Christ in rags is something. To believe in Christ when he is shrouded in darkness, to stick hard and fast by the Saviour when all men speak ill of him and forsake him—that is true faith. He who singeth a song to Christ in the night, singeth the best song in all the world; for he singeth from the heart.

IV. I am afraid of wearying you; therefore I will not dwell on the excellences of night songs, but just, in the last place, SHOW YOU THEIR USE.

Well, beloved, it is very useful to sing in the night of our troubles, first, *because it will cheer ourselves.* When you were boys living in the country, and had some distance to go alone at night, don't you remember how you whistled and sang to keep your courage up? Well, what we do in the natural world we ought to do in the spiritual. There is nothing like singing to keep your spirits alive. When we have been in trouble, we have often thought ourselves to be well-nigh overwhelmed with difficulty; and we have said, "Let us have a song." We have begun to sing; and Martin Luther says, "The devil can not bear singing." That is about the truth; he does not like music. It was so in Saul's days: an evil spirit rested on Saul; but when David played on his harp, the evil spirit went away from him. This is usually the case: if we can begin to sing we shall remove our fears. I like to hear servants sometimes humming a tune at their work; I love to hear a plowman in the country singing as he goes along with his horses. Why not? You say he has no time to praise God; but he can sing a song—surely he can sing a Psalm, it will take no more time. Singing is the best thing

to purge ourselves of evil thoughts. Keep your mouth full of songs, and you will often keep your heart full of praises; keep on singing as long as you can; you will find it a good method of driving away your fears.

Sing in the night, again, because *God loves to hear his people sing in the night.* At no time does God love his children's singing so well as when they give a serenade of praise under his window, when he has hidden his face from them, and will not appear to them at all. They are all in darkness; but they come under his window, and they begin to sing there. "Ah!" says God, "that is true faith, that can make them sing praises when I will not look at them; I know there is some faith in them, that makes them lift up their hearts, even when I seem to take away all my tender mercies and all my compassions." Sing, Christian, for singing pleases God. In heaven, we read, the angels are employed in singing: do you be employed in the same way; for by no better means can you gratify the Almighty One of Israel, who stoops from his high throne to observe the poor creature of a day.

Sing, again, for another reason: because *it will cheer your companions.* If any of them are in the valley and in the darkness with you, it will be a great help to comfort them. John Bunyan tells us, that as Christian was going through the valley he found it a dreadful dark place, and terrible demons and goblins were all about him, and poor Christian thought he must perish for certain; but just when his doubts were the strongest, he heard a sweet voice; he listened to it, and he heard a man in front of him saying, "Yea, when I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" Now, that man did not know who was near him, but he was unwittingly singing to cheer a man behind. Christian, when you are in trouble, sing; you do not know who is near you Sing perhaps you will get a good companion by it. Sing! perhaps there will be many a heart cheered by your song There is some broken spirit, it may be, that will be bound up by your sonnets. Sing! there is some poor distressed brother, perhaps, shut up in the Castle of Despair, who, like King Richard, will hear your song inside the walls, and sing to you again, and you may be the means of getting him a ransom.

Sing, Christian, wherever you go; try, if you can, to wash your face every morning in a bath of praise. When you go down from your chamber, never go to look on man till you have first looked on your God; and when you have looked on him, seek to come down with a face beaming with joy; carry a smile, for you will cheer up many a poor way-worn pilgrim by it. And when thou fastest, Christian—when thou hast an aching heart, do not appear to men to fast; appear cheerful and happy; anoint thy head, and wash thy face; be happy for thy brother's sake; it will tend to cheer him up, and help him through the valley.

One more reason; and I know it will be a good one for you. Try and sing in the night, Christian, for *that is one of the best arguments in all the world in favor of your religion.* Our divines, now-a-days, spend a great deal of time in trying to prove Christianity against those who disbelieve it. I should like to have seen Paul trying that! Elymas the sorcerer withstood him: how did our friend Paul treat him? He said "O, full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" That is about the politeness such men ought to have who deny God's truth. We start with this assumption: we will prove that the Bible is God's word, but we are not going to prove God's word. If you do not like to believe it, we will shake hands, and bid you good-by; we will not argue with you. The gospel has gained little by discussion. The greatest piece of folly on earth has been to send a man round the country, to follow another up who has been lecturing on infidelity just to make himself notorious.

Why, let them lecture on; this is a free country; why should we follow them about? The truth will win the day. Christianity need not wish for controversy; it is strong enough for it, if it wishes it; but that is not God's way. God's direction is, "Preach, teach, dogmatize." Do not stand disputing; claim a divine mission; tell men that God says it, and there leave it. Say to them, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" and when you have done that, you have done enough. For

what reason should our missionaries stand disputing with Brahmins? Why should they be wasting their time by attempting to refute first this dogma, and then another, of heathenism? Why not just go and say, "The God whom ye ignorantly worship, I declare unto you; believe me, and you will be saved; believe me not, and the Bible says you are lost." And then, having thus asserted God's word, say, "I leave it, I declare it unto you; it is a thing for you to believe, not a thing for you to reason about." Religion is not a thing merely for your intellect; a thing to prove your own talent upon, by making a syllogism on it; it is a thing that demands your faith. As a messenger of heaven, I demand that faith; if you do not choose to give it, on your own head be the doom, if there be such; if there be not, you are prepared to risk it. But I have done my duty; I have told you the truth; that is enough, and there I leave it. O, Christian, instead of disputing, let me tell thee how to prove your religion. Live it out! live it out! Give the external as well as the internal evidence; give the external evidence of your own life. You are sick; there is your neighbor, who laughs at religion; let him come into your house. When he was sick, he said, "O, send for the doctor;" and there he was fretting, and fuming, and whining, and making all manner of noises. When you are sick, send for him; tell him that you are resigned to the Lord's will; that you will kiss the chastening rod; that you will take the cup, and drink it, because your Father gives it. You need not make a boast of this, or it will lose all its power; but do it because you can not help doing it. Your neighbor will say, "There is something in that." And when you come to the borders of the grave—he was there once, and you heard how he shrieked, and how frightened he was—give him your hand, and say to him, "Ah! I have a Christ that will do to die by; I have a religion that will make me sing in the night." Let him hear how you can sing, "Victory, victory, victory!" through him that loved you. I tell you, we may preach fifty thousand sermons to prove the gospel, but we shall not prove it half so well as you will through singing in the night. Keep a cheerful frame; keep a happy heart; keep a contented spirit; keep your eye up, and your heart aloft, and you will

prove Christianity better than all the Butlers, and all the wise men that ever lived. Give them the analogy of a holy life, and then you will prove religion to them; give them the evidence of internal piety, developed externally, and you will give the best possible proof of Christianity. Try and sing songs in the night; for they are so rare, that if thou canst sing them, thou wilt honor thy God.

I have been preaching all this while to the children of God, and now there is a sad turn that this subject must take, just one moment or so, and then we have done. There is a night coming, in which there will be no songs of joy—a night in which no one will even attempt to lead a chorus. There is a night coming when a song shall be sung, of which misery shall be the subject, set to the music of wailing and gnashing of teeth; there is a night coming when woe, unutterable woe, shall be the matter of an awful terrific *miserere*—when the orchestra shall be composed of damned men, and howling fiends, and yelling demons; and mark you, I speak what I do know, and testify the Scriptures. There is a night coming for a poor soul within this house to-night; and unless he repent, it will be a night wherein he will have to growl, and howl, and sigh, and cry, and moan and groan forever. "Who is that?" sayest thou. Thyself, my friend, if thou art godless and Christless. "What!" sayest thou, "am I in danger of hell-fire?" In danger, my friend! Ay, more: thou art damned already. So saith the Bible. Sayest thou, "And can you leave me without telling me what I must do to be saved? Can you believe that I am in danger of perishing, and not speak to me?" I trust not; I hope I shall never preach a sermon without speaking to the ungodly, for O! how I love them. Swearer, your mouth is black with oaths now; and if you die, you must go on blaspheming throughout eternity, and be punished for it throughout eternity. But list to me, blasphemer! Dost thou repent to-night? Dost thou feel thyself to have sinned against God? Dost thou feel a desire to be saved? List thee! thou mayest be saved; thou mayest be saved as much as any one that is now here. There is another: she has sinned against God enormously, and she blushes even now, while I mention her case. Dost thou repent of thy sin?

There is hope for thee. Remember him who said, "Go, and sin no more." Drunkard! but a little while ago thou wast reeling down the street, and now thou repentest. Drunkard! there is hope for thee. "Well," sayest thou, "what shall I do to be saved?" Then again let me tell thee the old way of salvation. It is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou art saved." We can get no further than that, do what we will; this is the sum and substance of the gospel. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved. So saith the Scripture. Dost thou ask, "What is it to believe?" Am I to tell thee again? I can not tell thee, except that it is to look at Christ. Dost thou see that Saviour there? He is hanging on the cross; there are his dear hands, pierced with nails, nailed to a tree, as if they were waiting for thy tardy footsteps, because thou wouldst not come. Dost thou see his dear head there? It is hanging on his breast, as if he would lean over, and kiss thy poor soul. Dost thou see his blood, gushing from his head, his hands, his feet, his side? It is running after thee; because he well knew that thou wouldst never run after it. Sinner! to be saved, all that thou hast to do is, to look at that Man. Canst thou do it now? "No," sayest thou, "I do not believe it will save me." Ah! my poor friend, try it; and if thou dost not succeed, when thou hast tried it, I am bondsman for my Lord—here, take me, bind me, and I will suffer thy doom for thee. This I will venture to say: if thou castest thyself on Christ, and he deserteth thee, I will be willing to go halves with thee in all thy misery and woe. For he will never do it: never, never, never!

"No sinner was ever
Empty sent back,
Who came seeking mercy
For Jesus' sake."

I beseech thee, therefore, try him, and thou shalt not try him in vain, but shalt find him "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." Thou shalt be saved now, and saved forever.

May God give you his blessing! I can not preach as earnestly as I could wish; but, nevertheless, may God accept these words, and send them home to some hearts this night! and may you, my dear brethren and sisters, have songs in the night!

SERMON XII.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

"Now, as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl; and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; and they returned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up."—EZEKIEL, i. 15–19.

WHILE reading the Scriptures, we tried to hint at the practical benefits of the doctrine of Providence. We attempted to explain that portion of Scripture which teaches us to "take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself." Our blessed Lord had there uttered very precious words to drive away our fears, to keep us from distrust and from distress, and to enable us so to rely upon Providence that we may say, he that feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies, will never suffer me to famish nor to be naked. Having shown you from our Lord's own words the practical benefits of the doctrine of Providence, I thought I would endeavor to explain that doctrine more fully this morning. I am constantly talking about Providence in my preaching, and I thought it quite as well to devote a whole sermon to explain what I believe are God's great wonder-working processes which we call Providence. In looking for a text I found this. These "wheels" signify divine Providence; and I trust, while explaining them, I may be so assisted by God's Spirit that I may say many things to you concerning God's

government which may rejoice any who are despolding, and lift up the souls of many who are distressed.

I. Going at once to my divisions, my first remark will be that Providence is here *compared to a "wheel."* When the prophet had seen the "living creatures," which I take it were angels, he opened his eyes again, and he saw a wonderful illustration of the divine Providence, and this exhibition was in the figure of a wheel. You must know that this is not the only place where the comparison is to be found; for among the classics, the Romans and the Greeks were accustomed to compare the wondrous works of God in Providence to a wheel. The story goes, that a certain king being taken prisoner, was bound in chains, and dragged along at the chariot wheels of his conqueror. As he went along, he kept looking at the wheel, and shedding tears—looking at the wheel again, and lifting up his eyes and smiling. The conqueror turned and said, "Wherefore art thou looking at that wheel?" He said, "I was thinking, such is the lot of man; just now I was here; now I am there; but soon I may be here again at the top of the wheel, and thou mayest be grinding the dust." This was well for a heathen. The prophet had the very same idea. He was permitted by God to see that the wheel is a very beautiful figure of divine Providence. Let us show you that it is. I have just hinted at the reason why Providence is like a wheel; because sometimes one part of the wheel is at the top, and one again at the bottom. Sometimes this part is exalted, and anon it sinks down to the dust. Then it is lifted into the air, and then again by a single revolution it is brought down again to the earth. Just as our poet sings—

> "Here he exalts neglected worms
> To sceptres and a crown;
> And there the following page he turns,
> And treads the monarch down."

So it is with our life. Sometimes we are in humble poverty, and hardly know what we shall do for bread; anon the wheel revolves, and we are brought into the comfort of wealth; our feet stand in a spacious room; we are fed with corn and wine; we drink of a cup overflowing its brim. Again we are brought

low through affliction and famine. A little while and another page is turned, and we are exalted to the heavens, and can sing and rejoice in the Lord our God. I have no doubt many of you here have experienced a far more checkered life than I have, and therefore you can feel that your life has been as a "wheel." Ah! man, thou art strong, and great, and rich; thou mayest stand now as the uppermost part of it; but it is wheel, and you may yet be brought low. And you, poor, who are depressed and downcast, who are weeping because you know not where you shall lay your heads—that wheel may revolve and you may be lifted up. Our own experience is never a stable thing; it is always changing, always turning round. The fly that sits now on the edge of the wheel may be crushed by its next revolution, and be brought to the dust of death the next day. The world may cry "Hosannah" to its minister to-day, and the next day may say, "Crucify him, crucify him." Such is the state of man. Providence is like a wheel.

You know in a wheel there is one portion that never turns round, that stands steadfast; and that is the axle. So in God's Providence, there is an axle which never moves. Christian here is a sweet thought for thee! Thy state is ever changing, sometimes thou art exalted, and sometimes depressed; yet there is an unmoving point in thy state. What is that axle? What is the pivot upon which all the machinery revolves? It is the axle of God's everlasting love toward his covenant people. The exterior of the wheel is changing, but the center stands forever fixed. Other things may move; but God's love never moves: it is the axle of the wheel; and this is another reason why Providence should be compared to a wheel.

Yet further. You observe when the wheel moves very rapidly you can discern nothing but the circumference—nothing but the exterior circle. So, if you look back to history, and read the story of a thousand years, you just set the wheel of Providence revolving rapidly; you lose sight of all the little things that are within the circle; you see only one great thing, and that is, that God is working through the world his everlasting purposes. You sit down and take a

book of history—say the History of England—and you will say of one event, "Now that seems to be out of place;" of another, "That seems to be out of time;" of another, "That seems to be adverse to the cause of liberty;" but look through a thousand years, and those things which seemed as if they would crush liberty in her germ; those things which seemed as if they would destroy this our commonwealth in our very rising, have been those which have caused the sturdy oak of liberty to take deeper root. Take the whole together, instead of the things one by one; look at a thousand years, and you will see nothing but one round ring of symmetry, teaching you that God is wise, and God is just. So let it be with you in your lives. Here you are fretting about troubles to-day. Think also of the past; put all your troubles together, and they are no troubles at all. You will see that one counteracts the other. If you take your life—not to-day, but look back on forty years of it—you will be obliged, instead of lamenting and mourning, to bless God for his mercies toward you. Let the wheel go round, and you will see nothing but a ring of everlasting wisdom revolving. I trust I have made the first part intelligible—that the Providence of God is here compared to a wheel.

II. The second thought is that the Providence of God is in some mysterious way *connected with angels*. Look at the text: "Now as I beheld the living creatures." Then turn to the 19th verse: "And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up." These living creatures I believe to be angels; and the text teaches us that there is a connection between Providence and angelic agency. I do not know how to explain it; I can not tell how it is; but I believe angels have a great deal to do with the business of this world. In times of miracles and wondrous things, there was an angel that came down and slew the first-born of Egypt; and an angel cut off the hosts of Sennacherib. Angels did mighty things in those ancient days. My firm belief is, that angels are sent forth somehow or other to bring about the great purposes of God. The great wheel of Providence is turned by an angel. When there is some

trouble which seems to stop that wheel, some mighty cherub puts his shoulder to it, and hurls it around, and makes the chariot of God's Providence still go on. Angels have much more to do with us than we imagine. I do not know but that spirits sometimes come down and whisper thoughts into our ears. I have strange thoughts sometimes, that seem to come from a land of dreams; and fiery visions that make my soul hot within me. Sometimes I have thoughts which I know come from God's Spirit; some which are glorious, and some that are not so good as those which the Spirit would have put there, but still holy thoughts; and I often attribute them to angels. I have sometimes a thought which cheers me in distress; and was not an angel sent to strengthen Christ in the garden? How do you think the angel strengthened him? Why, by putting thoughts into Christ's mind. He could not in any other way: he could not strengthen him by a plaster, or by any physical means; but by injecting thoughts. And so with us. There was a temptation which might have led you astray; but God said, "Gabriel, fly! there is a danger to one of my people; go and put such a thought into his soul, that when the danger comes he will say, Get thee behind me, Satan, I will have nothing to do with sin." We have each of us a guardian angel to attend us; and if there be any meaning in the passage, "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," it means that every person has a guardian spirit, and every Christian has some angel who flies about him, and holds the shield of God over his brow; keeps his foot, lest he should dash it against a stone; guards him, controls him, manages him; injects thoughts, restrains evil desires, and is the minister and servant of the Holy Ghost to keep us from sin, and lead us to righteousness. Whether I am right or wrong, I leave you to judge; but perhaps I have more angelology in me than most people. I know my imagination sometimes has been so powerful that I could almost, when I have been alone at night, fancy I saw an angel fly by me, and hear the horse-hoofs of the cherubim as they dashed along the stony road when I have been out preaching the word. However, I take it that the text teaches us that angels have very much to do

with God's Providence. For it says, "And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up." Let us bless God that he has made angels ministering spirits to minister unto them that are heirs of salvation.

III. Our third remark shall be, that Providence is *universal;* and that you will see by the text: "Behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces." The wheel had "four faces." I think that means one face to the north, another to the south, another to the east, and another to the west. There is a face to every quarter. Providence is universal, looking to every quarter of the globe. Have you ever been in a house where there was an old picture hanging? I have sometimes stood in a picture-gallery, and there has been some old warrior: he has looked at me. If I have gone to the other end of the room, he has still looked at me; wherever you are in the room, a well-painted portrait will be looking at you. Such is the Providence of God; wherever you are, the eye of God will be upon you—as much upon you as if there were not another person in the whole world. If there were only one, you might think how much God would look upon that one; but he looks on each one of us as if there were no other created being, and nothing else in the whole world. His eye is fixed upon us at every hour, and at every moment. Wherever we may be, we shall have one face of the wheel turned upon us.

You can not banish me from my Lord. Send me to the snows of Siberia or Lapland, I shall have the eyes of God there; send me to Australia, and let me toil at the gold diggings, there will he visit me. If you send me to the utmost verge of the round globe, I shall still have the eye of God upon me. Put me in the desert where there is not one single blade of grass growing, and his presence shall cheer me. Or let me go to sea, amid the howlings of the tempest and the shrieking wind, where the mad waves lift up their hands to the skies as if they would pluck the stars from their cloudy thrones, and I shall have the eye of God there. Let me sink, and let my gurgling voice be heard among the waves—let my body lie down in the caverns of the sea, and the eye of

God shall be on every bone, and in the day of the resurrection shall my every atom be tracked in its wanderings. Yes, the eye of God is everywhere; Providence is universal.

Now there may be some here who have friends far away—let me comfort them. The eye of God is looking on them. There may be some here who are about to part with beloved ones who are going to distant countries. Wherever they are, they will be as much in the keeping of God as though they were here. If one part of the world is not as near the sun's light as another, yet they are all equally near the eye of our God. Transport me where you please—wherever the cloudy pillar of Providence shall guide me—and I shall have God with me. That thought comforted the great traveler, Mungo Park, when he was in the desert of Sahara. He had been robbed and stripped of every thing, and was left naked. He suddenly saw a little piece of moss; and taking it up, he saw how beautiful it was. He said: "Then the hand of God is here—here is one of his works; though I call loudly none can hear me, for there is nothing but the prowling lion and the howling jackal; yet God is here." That comforted him. Wherever you may be, whatever may be your case, God will be with you. Whatever period of your life you may now be in, God is with you. His eye is at the bridal and at the funeral; at the cradle and at the grave. In the battle, God's eye is looking through the smoke; in the revolution, there is God's hand managing the masses of men who have broken loose from their rulers. In the earthquake, there is Jehovah manifest; in the tempest, there is God's hand, tossing the bark, dashing it against the rocks, or saving it in his hand from the boisterous waves. In all seasons, at all times, in all dangers, and in all climates, there is the hand of God.

IV. Our next remark is, that Providence is *uniform*. It is only one Providence, and ever one. "Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness." There were four wheels and four faces, yet one likeness. There was but one piece of machinery; and thus we are taught that Providence is all

one. Sometimes providences seem to cross each other. One thing that God does seems to contradict the next thing; but it never really does so. It is a great truth, though hard for us to grasp, that Providence is one. Just look at the case of Joseph. God has it in his mind that Joseph shall be governor over all the land of Egypt: how is that to be done? The first thing to be done is that Joseph's brethren must hate him O, say you, that is a step backward. Next, Joseph's brethren must put him in the pit. That is another step backward, say you. No, it is not: wait a little. Joseph's brethren must sell him; that is another step backward, is it not? Providence is one, and you must not look at its separate parts. He is sold; he becomes a favorite: so far, so good. That is a step onward. Anon, he is put in a dungeon. Wait and see the end; all the different parts of the machinery are one. They appear to clash; but they never do. Put them all together. If Joseph had not been put in the pit, he never would have been the servant of Potiphar: if he never had been put in the round-house, he never would have interpreted the jailor's dream; and if the king had never dreamed, he would not have been sent for. There were a thousand chances, as the world has it, working together to produce the exaltation of Joseph. Providence is one: it never clashes. O, says one, I can not understand that; Providence seems to be very adverse to me. Mrs. Hannah More, I think it is, says, she went into a place where they were manufacturing a carpet. She said: "There is no beauty there." The man said: "It is one of the most beautiful carpets you ever saw." "Why, here is a piece hanging out, and it is all in disorder." "Do you know why, ma'am? You look at the wrong side." So it is very often with us. You and I think Providence is very bad, because we are looking at the wrong side. We do look at the wrong side while we are here, but when we get to heaven we shall see the right side of God's dealings; and when we do we shall say: "Lord, how wonderful are thy works: in wisdom thou hast made them all: glorious are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." You have been puzzled sometimes to think why that friend was brought into the grave. You have said. Why was I made sick at such

a time? Why that trouble and that calamity? That is no business of yours. It is yours to believe that all things work together for one great purpose: that one thing never crosses another. But you must not expect to see it so just yet. Here on earth the machine appears to be broken into pieces and we can only see it in confusion; but in heaven we shall see it all put together. Suppose I go into a place where some great artist is manufacturing a machine: I say, Do you mean to say this is a machine? Yes, and an exquisite one it will be. It does not look like it; I could not put it together. O, no, sir, you could not, but I can: and come and see it when I have put it together, and you shall see that each part fits—that each cog on one wheel will work on the cog of another wheel, and all the parts will move together when I adjust them. Do not find fault with it, and say, One is too small and another too large, because you know nothing at all about it. So, dear friends, you and I can never see but parts of God's ways. We only see here a wheel and there a wheel; but we must wait till we get to heaven, then we shall see the right side of the carpet; we shall see it all put together, and then we shall see it was one piece of machinery, had one end, one aim, one object, and was all one.

V. The next thought is, that Providence is in this text *compared to the sea.* Look to the 16th verse—"The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl." The word beryl is commonly used in Scripture to denote the ocean, because it bears the greatest likeness to that deep green you sometimes see, and at other times the blue appearance of the sea. Let us transport ourselves for a moment to the top of some high cliff, and we look down on the noisy ocean. It has been the theme of a thousand songs; it has borne myriads of fleets on its mighty breast. Ay! and yet there it is rolling on. If you begin to think about the ocean, though it is one of the minor parts of God's works compared with the constellations of the heavens, and the globes which he has hung on high, you begin to be lost in the vastness of your conceptions concerning the greatness of God's works. And so with Providence. It is like the ocean for another reason. The sea is never still; both day and night it

is always moving. In the day, when the sun shines upon it, its waves march up in marshaled order as if about to capture the whole land, and drown all the solid earth. Then again they march back each one as if reluctant to yield its prey. It is always moving: the moon shines upon it, and the stars light it up; still it moves. Or, it is darkness, and nothing is seen: still it moves—by night and day the restless billows chant a boisterous hymn of glory, or murmur the solemn dirge of mariners wrecked far out in the depths. Such is Providence; by night or day Providence is always going on. The farmer sleeps, but his wheat is growing. The mariner on the sea sleeps, but the wind and the waves are carrying on his bark. Providence! thou never stoppest; thy mighty wheels never stay their everlasting circles. As the blue ocean has rolled on impetuously for ages, so shall Providence, until he who first set it in motion shall bid it stop; and then its wheels shall cease, forever fixed by the eternal decree of the mighty God.

Again, you will see another reason why the sea is like Providence. Man can not manage it. Who can rule or govern the sea? Men can not. Xerxes made chains for the Hellespont, and lashed the sea with whips because it washed away his boats; but what cared the sea about that? It laughed at him; and if he had not been too great a coward to put himself on its bosom, it might have swallowed him. Canute put his chair on the beach, and bade the waves retire. What cared they for him? They came and would have washed him and his chair away if he had not moved backward. The sea is not to be governed by man. A whole fleet sails over it, and it is only like a feather blown by the wind across the surface of a brook. All we ever put on the sea is as nothing. It can never be restrained, nor chained, nor managed by man. Greedy man hath carved the land, but the sea has no landmark. It is impetuous; it follows its own will. So does Providence; it will not be managed by man. Napoleon once heard it said, that man proposes and God disposes. "Ah," said Napoleon, "but I propose and dispose too." How do you think he proposed and disposed. He proposed to go and take Russia; he proposed to make all Europe his. He pro-

posed to destroy that power, and how did he come back again? How had he disposed it? He came back solitary and alone, his mighty army perished and wasted, having well-nigh eaten and devoured one another through hunger. Man proposes and God disposes. Providence, like the sea, can not be directed by man; it can be controlled by God. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"—

> "Chained to his throne a volume lies,
> With all the fates of men."

Man can not alter it, and can not change it. Let him try to stand against God's Providence; and Providence will grind and crush him.

There are many more reasons; but I think it would be wasting time to notice them. I leave you to finish that part of the subject.

VI. Again, God's Providence is *intricate.* This is our sixth remark; and that you will find is here too. "The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl; and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel." We have just said that Providence is *intricate* When Joseph brought his two sons up to Jacob's deathbed side, Jacob ordered the two boys to be brought; and when he was about to bless them, he guided his hands wittingly; and he put his right hand on the head of the youngest, and his left hand on the head of the eldest. "O!" said Joseph, "not so, my father." But he said, "it is even so;" and he gave the blessing. He would not give the blessing in any other way; but he crossed his hands. And so God usually blesses his children by crossing his hands. We say, "Do not deal so with me." "It is even so, child; there is a blessing on thy head." Do not say, Uncross thy hands; that is the way to bless the most of all. I wish to put thee greatest blessing upon thee; and therefore I have crossed my hands. Providence is wonderfully intricate. Ah! you want always to see through Providence, do you not? You never will, I assure you. You have not eyes good enough. You want to see what good that affliction was to you; you must believe it

You want to see how it can bring good to the soul; you may be enabled in a little time; but you can not see it now; you must believe it. Honor God by trusting him. God has many gordian knots which wicked men may cut, and which righteous men may try to unravel, but which God alone can untie. We see the wicked prosper; they flourish, and great is their power, while the righteous are cast down. We say why? There are wheels within wheels. Do not fret yourselves because evil-doers are more prosperous. There may be a nation that seems to have right on its side; that nation may be crushed, and another people who are tyrannical may get the victory. Do not say why? Do not ask? You shall know the reason when you get up yonder:

> "God plants his footsteps in the sea,
> And rides upon the storm."

Do not attempt to do what Gabriel never dare do—to ask the reason why, for God will never give it.

VII. Providence is always *correct*. I shall not detain you long over this. The prophet saw the wheels, and he well says, they turned not when they went, they always went straight forward; they never turned to the right or to the left. Such is God's Providence. Man marks out plans: he says, I shall build this tower; he gets it half-way up, and he finds he has not enough to finish it with; he has to pull it down, lay a smaller foundation, and build again. God never does so; he has a plan when he begins, and he carries that plan out: he lays the foundation, and always finishes the top-stone. There are some who talk about God's changing his purpose; such people do not know what God is at all. How could God change? God must either change from a better to a worse, or from a worse to a better. If he change from a worse to a better, he is not perfect now; and if he change from what he is to something worse, he will not be perfect then, and he will not be God. He can not change. It is not possible that God should ever change or shift in any of his purposes. Can he change because he has not power? Why, sirs, he could girdle this globe with mountains, or move the hills into the sea. Can he change because he has not patience enough? What, he who from his purpose never swerves?

Shall he change because he has made a mistake? Shall the Most High, Jehovah, ever have an error in his mighty mind? To err is human. With the divine Being the whole goes on, and what he has ordained shall be. On the iron rock of destiny it is written, and it can not be altered. God moves the wheel, and the wheel goes on; and though a thousand armies stand to stop it, it goes on still. "They turned not to the right hand nor to the left when they went." I can not make out what some of you do with your comfortless gospel—believing that God loves you to-day, and hates you to-morrow—that you are a child of God one day, and a child of the devil the next. I could not believe a gospel like that. If I were a heathen, I could believe it at once, because I could manufacture a god of wood and stone. I would have a god of mud, that I could alter with my fingers, and change it to any fashion. But if I once believe in a God that "was and is, and is to come," I know he can not change; and I feel a constancy of faith, and a firmness of hope, which the cares and trials of this mortal life can not destroy. He will not cast off his people whom he hath chosen.

VIII. One more thought. Providence is *amazing*. We shall not dwell on this; but just show you that the text says so. "As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four." Even the man that knows that every wave that dashes against the ship is washing him nearer home—that every breath of wind that rises comes to his sail and fills it, and sends it to the white cliffs of his native Albion—even the man that feels that all is for him—even he must say that Providence is amazing. O! that thought, it staggers thought! O! it is an idea that overwhelms me—that God is working all! The sins of man, the wickedness of our race, the crimes of nations, the iniquities of kings, the cruelties of wars, the terrific scourge of pestilence—all these things in some mysterious way are working the will of God! We must not look at it; we can not look at it. I can not explain it. I can not tell you where human will and free agency unite with God's sovereignty and with his unfailing decrees. This has been the place where intellectual gladiators have fought with each

other ever since the time of Adam. Some have said, Man does as he likes; and others have said, God does as he pleases. In one sense, they are both true; but there is no man that has brains or understanding enough to show where they meet. We can not tell how it is that I do just as I please as to which street I shall go home by; and yet I can not go home but through a certain road. John Newton used to say, there were two streets to go to St. Mary Woolnoth; but Providence directed him as to which he should use. Last Sabbath-day I came down a certain street—I do not know why—and there was a young man who wished to speak to me; he wished to see me many times before. I say that was God's Providence—that I might meet that young man. Here was Providence, and yet there was my choice; how, I can not tell. I can not comprehend it. I believe that every particle of dust that dances in the sunbeam does not move an atom more or less than God wishes—that every particle of spray that dashes against the steamboat has its orbit as well as the sun in the heavens—that the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as the stars in their courses. The creeping of an aphis over the rosebud is as much fixed as the march of the devastating pestilence—the fall of sere leaves from a poplar is as fully ordained as the tumbling of an avalanche. He that believes in a God must believe this truth. There is no standing-point between this and atheism. There is no half way between a mighty God that worketh all things by the sovereign counsel of his will and no God at all. A God that can not do as he pleases—a God whose will is frustrated, is not a God, and can not be a God. I could not believe in such a God as that.

IX. Our last and closing idea is, that Providence *is full of wisdom;* and you will see this by the last part of the 18th verse—"And their rings were full of eyes round about them four." You will say this morning, Our minister is a fatalist. Your minister is no such thing. Some will say, Ah! he believes in fate. He does not believe in fate at all. What is fate? Fate is this—*Whatever is, must be.* But there is a difference between that and Providence. Providence says, *Whatever God ordains, must be;* but the wisdom of God never ordains any thing without a purpose. Every thing in

this world is working for some one great end. Fate does not say that. Fate simply says that the thing must be; Providence says, God moves the wheels along, and there they are. If any thing would go wrong, God puts it right; and if there is any thing that would move awry, he puts his hand and alters it. It comes to the same thing; but there is a difference as to the object. There is all the difference between fate and Providence that there is between a man with good eyes and a blind man. Fate is a blind thing; it is the avalanche crushing the village down below and destroying thousands. Providence is not an avalanche; it is a rolling river, rippling at the first like a rill down the sides of the mountain, followed by minor streams, till it rolls in the broad ocean of everlasting love, working for the good of the human race. The doctrine of Providence is not, that *what is, must be;* but that, what is, works together for the good of our race, and especially for the good of the chosen people of God. The wheels are full of eyes; not blind wheels.

Let us close with the thought, that there is the greatest wisdom in the workings of Providence. Now you were in great distress probably, and you could not see why. The next time you are in distress, you must say, The wheels are full of eyes: I have but two eyes; but God's wheels are full of eyes —God can see every thing; I can only see one thing at a time. I see it looks good for me now; I do not know what it will be to-morrow. I see what the plant is now; I do not know what it will be to-morrow. I know not what kind of flower that herb will yield. This affliction is a cassava root, full of poison, and would soon destroy me; but God can put that in the oven, so that all the poison shall evaporate, and it shall become food for me to live upon. This trouble of mine seems to me to be destructive: God shall get all the destroying power out of it, and it shall be made food. Now, thou tried one, groaning down in the valley, up with thine heart; away with thy tears; put thy hand on thy breast, and make thy heart stop its hard beating—thou poor soul! dash the cup of misery from thine hand; thou art not condemned; thou art a pardoned Christian. Remember that God hath said, "All things work together for good"—more still, they "work to-

gether for good to them that love God, even to them that are called according to his purpose." O! how I would like to make your hearts like flint and steel against trouble! We can not bear the winds of trouble; we are soon cast down and broken-hearted. When we are in prosperity, we are giants; we think we can do like Samson; we can take hold of the two pillars of trouble and distress, and we can pull them down. But once tell us that the Philistines will be upon us, and we have no power.

He who has faith is better than the stoic. The stoical philosopher bore it, because he believed it must be; the Christian bears it, because he believes it is working for his good. Next time trouble comes, disease comes, pestilence comes, smile at it, and say:

> "He that has made his refuge God,
> Shall find a most secure abode;
> Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
> And there at night shall rest his head."

Let this be thy shield to keep off the thrusts of distress, let this be thy high rock against all the winds of sorrow. Sing,

> "Though the way may be rough, it can not be long,
> So smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song."

SERMON XIII.

A VIEW OF GOD'S GLORY

"And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory."—EXODUS xxxiii. 18.

THAT was a large request to make. He could not have asked for more: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." Why, it is the greatest petition that man ever asked of God. It seems to me the greatest stretch of faith that I have either heard or read of. It was great faith which made Abraham go into the plain to offer up intercession for a guilty city like Sodom. It was vast faith which enabled Jacob to grasp the angel; it was mighty faith which enabled Elijah to rend the heavens and fetch down rain from skies which had been like brass before; but it appears to me that this prayer contains a greater amount of faith than all the others put together. It is the greatest request that man could make to God: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." Had he requested a fiery chariot to whirl him up to heaven; had he asked to cleave the water-floods and drown the chivalry of a nation; had he prayed the Almighty to send fire from heaven to consume whole armies, I could have found a parallel to his prayer; but when he offers this petition, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," he stands alone, a giant among giants; a Colossus even in those days of mighty men. His request surpasses that of any other man: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." Among the lofty peaks and summits of man's prayers that rise like mountains to the skies, this is the culminating point; this is the highest elevation that faith ever gained: it is the loftiest place to which the great ambition of faith could climb; it is the topmost pillar of all the towering structures that confidence ever piled. I am astonished that Moses himself should have

been bold enough to supplicate so wondrous a favor. Surely after he had uttered the desire, his bones must have trembled, his blood curdled in his veins, and his hair must have stood on end. Did he not wonder at himself? Did he not tremble at his own hardihood? We believe that such would have been the case had not the faith which prompted the prayer sustained him in the review of it.

Whence, then, came faith like this? How did Moses obtain so eminent a degree of this virtue? Ah, beloved, it was by communion with God. Had he not been for forty days in the council-chamber with his God? Had he not tarried in the secret pavilion of burning fire? Had not Jehovah spoken to him as a man speaketh with his friend, he would not have had courage enough to ask so large a boon. Yea, more, I doubt whether all this communion would have been sufficient if he had not also received a fresh testimony to the grace of God, in sparing a nation through his intercession. Moses had argued with God, he had pleaded the covenant, and although God had said, "Let me alone that I may destroy them," he had still maintained his hold; he had even ventured to say, "If not, blot my name out of the book of life," let me die as well as the rest; he had wrestled hard with justice, and had prevailed. The strength gained by this victory, joined with his former communion with the Lord, made him mighty in prayer; but had he not received grace by these means, I think the petition was too large even for Moses to venture to carry to the throne. Would you, my brethren, have like faith, then walk in the same path. Be much in secret prayer. Hold constant fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; so shall you soar aloft on wings of confidence, so shall you also open your mouth wide and have it filled with divine favors, and if you do not offer the same request, yet you may have equal faith to that which bade Moses say, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

Allow me to refer you to the 13th verse of this chapter, where Moses speaks unto his God—"Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now THY WAY." Moses asked a less favor before he requested the greater. He asked to see God's WAY before he prayed to see

his GLORY. Mark you, my friends, this is the true mode of prayer. Rest not content with past answers, but double your request and go again. Look upon your past petitions as the small end of the wedge opening the way for larger ones. The best way to repay God, and the way he loves best, is to take and ask him ten times as much each time. Nothing pleases God so much as when a sinner comes again very soon with twice as large a petition—"Lord thou didst hear me last time, and now I am come again." Faith is a mighty grace, and always grows upon that which it feeds. When God has heard prayer for one thing, faith comes and asks for two things, and when God has given those two things, faith asks for six. Faith can scale the walls of heaven. She is a giant grace. She takes mountains by their roots, and puts them on other mountains, and so climbs to the throne in confidence with large petitions, knowing that she shall not be refused. We are most of us too slow to go to God. We are not like the beggars who come to the door twenty times if you do not give them any thing. But if we have been heard once, we go away, instead of coming time after time, and each time with a larger prayer. Make your petitions longer and longer. Ask for ten, and if God gives them, then for a thousand, and keep going on until at last you will positively get faith enough to ask, if it were proper, as great a favor as Moses did—"I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

Now, my friends, we have just spoken a word or two on the prayer itself; we shall have to see how it was received at the throne. It was answered, first, by a gracious manifestation; secondly, by a gracious concealment; and, thirdly, by a gracious shielding.

I. First of all this prayer which Moses offered was heard by God, and he gave him a gracious manifestation. "And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." I think when Moses put up this prayer to God, he was very much like Peter, when, on the mountain top, he wist not what he said. I do think that Moses himself hardly understood the petition that he offered

to God. With all the clearness of his ideas, however pure his conception of the divinity might be, I do think that even Moses himself had not adequate views of the Godhead. He did not then know so much of God as he now has learned where he stands before the throne of the Most High. I believe that Moses knew that God is a Spirit. I think he must have been sensible that the mind of man can never conceive an idea of the incomprehensible Jehovah. He must have learned that the God of Mount Sinai, the King whose feet glowed like a furnace, and made the mountain smoke, could never be grasped by the senses of a mortal. Yet it is likely with all this knowledge, the great lawgiver had a vague and indistinct idea that it might be possible for divinity to be seen. My friends, it is hard for creatures encumbered with flesh and blood to gain a just conception of a spirit. We are so linked with the material, that the spiritual is above our reach. Surely then, if a mere spirit is above our comprehension, much more "the Father of Spirits, the Eternal, Immortal, Invisible."

The poet sings most truly—

> "The more of wonderful
> Is heard in him, the more we should assent.
> Could we conceive him, God he could not be;
> Or he not God, or we could not be men.
> A God alone can comprehend a God."

These eyes are but organs to convey to me the knowledge of material substances; they can not discern spirits; it is not their duty; it is beyond their province. Purer than celestial ether of the most refined nature; subtler than the secret power of electricity; infinitely above the most rarified forms of matter is the existence we call a spirit. As well might we expect to bind the winds with cords, or smite them with a sword, as to behold spirits with eyes which were only made to see gross solid materialism

We find that Moses saw no similitude; no form passed before him. He had an audience; he had a vision; but it was an audience from behind a covering, and a vision, not of a person, but an attribute. Behold then the scene. There stands

Moses about to be honored with visions of God. The Lord is about to answer thee. O Moses, God is come. Dost thou not tremble; do not thy knees knock together; are not thy bones loosened; are not thy sinews broken? Canst thou bear the thought of God coming to thee? O, I can picture Moses as he stood in that cleft of the rock with the hand of God before his eyes, and I can see him look as man never looked before, confident in faith, yet more than confounded at himself, that he could have asked such a petition. Now, what attribute is God about to show to Moses? His petition is, "Show me thy glory." Will he show him his justice? Will he show him his holiness? Will he show his wrath? Will he show him his power? Will he break you cedar and show him he is almighty? Will he rend yonder mountain and show him that he can be angry? Will he bring his sins to remembrance, and show that he is omniscient? No; hear the still small voice—"I will make all my goodness pass before thee." Ah! the goodness of God is God's glory. God's greatest glory is that he is good. The brightest gem in the crown of God is his goodness. "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." There is a panorama such as time would not be long enough for you to see. Consider the goodness of God in creation. Who could ever tell all God's goodness there? Why, every creek that runs up into the shore is full of it where the fry dance in the water. Why, every tree and every forest rings with it; where the feathered songsters sit and make their wings quiver with delight and ecstacy. Why, every atom of this air, which is dense with animalculæ, is full of God's goodness. The cattle on a thousand hills he feeds; the ravens come and peck their food from his liberal hands. The fishes leap out of their element, and he supplies them; every insect is nourished by him. The lion roars in the forest for his prey, and he sendeth it to him. Ten thousand thousand creatures are all fed by him. Can you tell, then, what God's goodness is? If you knew all the myriad works of God, would your life be long enough to make all God's creative goodness pass before you? Then think of his goodness to the children of men. Think how many of our race have come into this world

and died. We are of yesterday, and we know nothing. Man is as a flower; he lives, he dies; he is the infant of a day, and he is gone to-morrow, but yet the Lord doth not forget him. O, my God! if thou shouldst make all thy goodness pass before me—all thy goodness to the children of men—I must sit me down on an adamantine rock forever and look throughout eternity; I should wear these eyes out, and must have eyes of fire, or else I should never be able to see all thy goodness toward the sons of men. But then, rise higher still, and think of his sovereign goodness toward his chosen people O, my soul, go thou back into eternity and see thy name in. God's book of predestinating, unchanging grace! And then come down to the time of redemption, and see there thy Saviour bleeding and agonizing. O my soul, there were drops of goodness before, but O, rivers of goodness roll before thee now! When thou sawest the Son of God groaning, agonizing, shrieking, dying, buried in his grave, and then rising again, thou sawest the goodness of God. "I will make all my goodness pass before thee" I say again, what a panorama! What a series of dissolving views! What sight upon sight, each one melting into the other! Could I stand here this morning, and borrow the eloquence of an angel; could I speak to you as I might wish—but, alas! I can not break these bonds that hold my stammering tongue—could I loose these lips and speak as angels speak, then could I tell you *something, but not much*, of the goodness of God; for it is "past finding out." Since I can not utter it myself, I would invoke all creation to be vocal in his praise. Ye hills, lift up your voices; let the shaggy woods upon your summits wave with adoration. Ye valleys, fill the air with the bleatings of your sheep and the lowing of your cattle. Ye that have life, if ye have voices, tune his praise; and if ye walk in silence, let your joyful motions show the thanks ye can not speak. O, ye trees of the field, clap your hands; ye winds, in solemn harmony chant to his glory. Thou ocean, with thy myriad waves, in all thy solemn pomp, thy motion to and fro, forget not him who bids a thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain, and write no furrow on thy ever youthful brow. And you, ye storms, howl out his greatness; let your thunders roll like drums in the march

of the God of armies; let your lightnings write his name in fire upon the midnight darkness; let the illimitable void of space become one mouth for song; and let the unnavigated ether, through its shoreless depths, bear through the infinite remote the name of him who is ever good and doeth good.

I can say no more concerning God's goodness. But this is not all that Moses saw. If you look to the words which follow my text, you will see that God said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee;" but there was something more. No one attribute of God sets God out to perfection; there must always be another. He said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." There is another attribute of God. There is his sovereignty. God's goodness without his sovereignty does not completely set forth his nature. I think of the man who, when he was dying, called me to see him. He said, "I am going to heaven." "Well," I replied, "what makes you think you are going there, for you never thought of it before?" Said he, "God is good." "Yes," I answered, "but God is just." "No," said he, "God is merciful and good." Now that poor creature was dying, and being lost forever; for he had not a right conception of God. He had only one idea of God, that God is good; but that is not enough. If you only see one attribute you only have half a God. God is good, and he is a sovereign, and doeth what he pleases; and though good to all in the sense of benevolence, he is not obliged to be good to any. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Do not you be alarmed, my friends, because I am going to preach about sovereignty. I know some people, when they hear about sovereignty, say, "O, we are going to have some terrible high doctrine." Well, if it is in the Bible, that is enough for you. Is not that all you want to know? If God says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," it is not for you to say it is high doctrine. Who told you it was high doctrine? It is good doctrine. What right have you to call one doctrine high and one low? Would you like me to have a Bible with "H" against high, and "L" against low, so that I could leave the

high doctrine out and please you? My Bible has no mark of that kind; it says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." There is divine sovereignty. I believe some are afraid to say any thing about this great doctrine lest they should offend some of their people; but, my friends, it is true, and you *shall* hear it. God is a sovereign. He was a sovereign ere he made this world. He lived alone, and this was in his mind: Shall I make any thing or shall I not? I have a right to make creatures or not to make any. He resolved that he would fashion a world. When he made it, he had a right to form the world in what shape and size he pleased; and he had a right, if he chose, to leave the globe untenanted by a single creature. When he had resolved to make man, he had a right to make him whatever kind of creature he liked. If he wished to make him a worm or a serpent, he had a right to do it. When he made him, he had a right to put any command on him that he pleased; and God had a right to say to Adam, Thou shalt not touch that forbidden tree. And when Adam offended, God had a right to punish *him*, and all the race forever in the bottomless pit. God is so far sovereign, that he has a right, if he likes, to save any one in this chapel, or to crush all who are here. He has a right to take us all to heaven if he pleases, or to destroy us. He has a right to do just as he pleases with us. We are are as much in his hands as prisoners in the hands of her majesty when they are condemned for a capital offense against the law of the land; yea, as much as clay in the hands of the potter. This is what he asserted, when he said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." This stirs up your carnal pride, does it not? Men want to be somebody. They do not like to lie down before God, and have it preached to them that God can do just as he will with them. Ah! you may hate it, but it is what the Scripture tells us. Surely it is self-evident that God may do as he will with his own. We all like to do what we will with our own property. God has said, that if you go to his throne he will hear you; but he has a right not to do it if he likes. He has a right to do just as he pleases. If he choose to let you go on in the error of your ways, that is his right; and if

he say, as he does, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," it is his right to do so. That is the high and awful doctrine of DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

Put the two together—goodness and sovereignty—and you see God's glory. If you take sovereignty alone, you will not understand God. Some people only have an idea of God's sovereignty, and not of his goodness; such are usually gloomy, harsh, and ill-humored. You must put the two together that God is good, and that God is a sovereign. You must speak of sovereign grace. God is not grace alone, he is sovereign grace. He is not sovereign alone, but he is graciously sovereign. That is the best idea of God. When Moses said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," God made him see that he was glorious, and that his glory was his sovereign goodness. Surely, beloved, we can not be wrong in loving the doctrine of free, unmerited, distinguishing grace, when we see it thus mentioned as the brightest jewel in the crown of our covenant God. Do not be afraid of election and sovereignty. The time is come when our ministers must tell us more about them; or, if not, our souls will be so lean and starved that we shall mutiny for the bread of life. O, may God send us more thorough gospel men, who will preach sovereign grace as the glory of the gospel.

II. The second point is—there was *a gracious concealment.* Read the next verse. "He said, thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." There was a gracious concealment. There was as much grace in that concealment as there was in the manifestation. Mark you, beloved, when God does not tell us any thing, there is as much grace in his withholding it as there is in any of his revelations. Did you ever hear or read the sentiment, that there is as much to be earned from what is not in the Bible, as from what there is in the Bible? Some people read the Scriptures, and they say, "I wish I knew so-and-so." Now you ought not to wish such a thing; for if it was good for you, it would be there; and there is as much grace in what God has not put in the Bible, as in what he has put there. If he had put more in it, it would have been our destruction. There is just enough and no more. Do you know how Robert of Normandy lost

his sight? His brother passed a red-hot copper bowl before his face, and burned the eyes out of their sockets; and there are some doctrines that men want to know, which, if they could understand them, it would be like passing a red-hot bowl before their eyes. They would scorch men's eyes out, and their understandings would be completely crushed. We have seen this in some ministers, who have studied so much that they have gone out of their minds. They have gone further than they ought to have ventured. There is a point to which we may go, and no further; and happy is the man who goes as near to it as possible without overstepping it. God said to Moses—"Thou canst not see my face and live." There are two senses in which this is true. No man can see God's face as a sinner; and no man can see God's face even as a saint.

First, no man can see God's face as a sinner. There comes a wretch before the throne of God. God has spread his books, and set his seat of judgment. There comes a man before the throne of God. Look at him! He is wearing a robe of his own righteousness. "Wretch, how camest thou in hither?" And the creature tries to look at God; he cries that he may live! But, no! God saith, *he* "can not see my face and live." Thus saith the Judge. "Executioners of my vengeance, come forth!" Angels come with crowns on their brows; they grasp their swords and stand ready—"Bind him hand and foot; cast him into the lake that burneth." The wretch is cast away into the fire of hell. He sees written in letters of fire—"No man can see my face and live;" clothed in his own righteousness, he must perish.

Then, again, it is true that no man, even as a saint, can see God's face and live; not because of moral disability, but because of physical inability. The body is not strong enough to bear the sight or vision of God. I can not tell whether even the saints in heaven see God. God dwells among them; but I do not know whether they ever behold him. That is a speculation. We can leave that till we get there. We will decide it when we get to heaven. I hardly know whether finite beings when immortalized would be capable of seeing God. This much is certain—that on earth, no man, however holy, can ever see God's face, and yet live. Why, Manoah, when he saw

an angel, thought he should die. He said—"I have seen an angel of the Lord; I shall die." If you and I were to meet an angel, or a troop of angels, as Jacob did at Mahanaim, we should say—"We shall die." The blaze of splendor would overwhelm us. We could not endure it. We "can not see God and live." All that we can ever see of God, is what Moses called his "back parts." The words, I think, signify "regal train." You have seen kings have trains hanging behind them; and all that we can ever see of God is his train that floats behind. Yon sun that burns in the heavens with all his effulgence, you think he is bright; you look upon him, and he dazzles you; but all his splendor is but a single thread in the regal skirts of the robe of Deity. You have seen night wrapped in her sable mantle woven with gems and stars—there they shine as ornaments worked by the needle of God in that brilliant piece of tapestry which is spread over our heads, like a tent for the inhabitants of the earth to dwell in: you have said—O! how majestic!—that star—that comet—that silver moon! How splendid. They are nothing, but just a tiny portion of the skirts of God that drag in the dust. But what are the shoulders—what the girdle of divinity—what the bracelets of Godhead—what the crown that girdles his lofty brow, man can not conceive; I could imagine that all the stars and constellations of stars might be put together and threaded into a string—made into a bracelet for the arm, or a ring for the finger of Jehovah—but I can not conceive what God is himself. All I can ever learn—all that the thunder ever spake—all that the boistrous ocean ever could teach me—all that the heaven above, or the earth beneath can ever open to my mind, is nothing but the "back parts" of God. I can never see; nor can I understand what he is.

III. Now, beloved, we go to the third point; and that is the gracious shielding. Moses had to be put in the cleft of a rock before he could see God. There was a rock in the wilderness once; Moses smote it, and water gushed out. The apostle tells us "*that* Rock was Christ." Very well, Paul, I believe it was. There is another thing I believe—I believe THIS ROCK was Christ. I know it was not Christ literally; but Moses stood on a literal rock. Moses stood on the top of a high

mountain, hidden in the cleft of a real rock. But, O, my soul, what is the cleft of the rock where thou must stand; if thou wouldst ever see God's face and live. O, it is the "Rock of ages cleft for me," where I must hide my head! O, what a cleaving that was when Jesus died! O, my soul, enter into the hole in Jesus' side. That is the cleft of the rock where thou must abide and see God.

"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind."

But when I get into the cleft of that rock, O, my soul, when I get into that cleft whose massive roof is the well ordered everlasting covenant, whose solid golden floor is made of the solemn decrees of the predestination of the Most High; and whose sides are called Jachin and Boaz, that is establishment and strength, a cleft in a rock which is so enduring that time can never dissolve it. Precious Christ! may I be found in thee amid the concussion of the elements when the world shall melt away, and the heavens shall be dissolved! O, may I stand in thee, thou precious cleft of the Rock; thou art all in all to my soul. Some of you, I know, are in that cleft of the Rock. But let me ask others, where are you? Let it be a personal question. I have preached a long while about God; I have tried to mount the height of this great argument and speak of the wondrous things of God. I may have failed, but let me say to each of you—Are you in that cleft of the rock? Can you sing this—

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

In closing, I want one practical inference, and what shall it be? Draw it yourselves. Let it be this—there is an hour coming, when we must all, in a certain sense, see God. We must see him as a Judge. It becomes us, then, to think seriously whether we shall stand in the cleft of the Rock when he

comes. There is a passage we would mention before closing —"I saw death on a pale horse, and hell followed him." There was death on the pale horse; and the original says— "*hades* followed him." You know the word *hades* comprises both heaven and hell. It means the state of spirits. Yes, death is after me and thee. Ah, run! run! run! but run as thou wilt, the rider on the white horse shall overtake thee. If thou canst escape him seventy years, he will overtake thee at last. Death is riding! Here his horse comes—I hear his snortings, I feel his hot breath—he comes! he comes! and thou must die! BUT, WICKED MAN, WHAT COMES AFTERWARD? Will it be heaven or hell? O, if it be hell that is after thee, where art thou when thou art cast away from God? Ah, I pray God deliver you from hell; he is coming after you, sure enough; and if you have no hiding-place, woe unto you. See you that cleft in the rock, see that cross, see that blood. There is security, and only there. Thy works are but a useless incumbrance; cast them away, and with all thy might flee to the mountain with

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Yea, more than this, you will need divine aid, even in coming to Christ—

"O, for this no strength have I,
My strength is at thy feet to lie."

But, poor helpless one, if thou art but hidden in Christ, all is secure. Storms may arise, but you can not be overwhelmed; old Boreas may blow until his cheeks do burst, but not a breath of wind can injure you; for in the cleft of the Rock you shall be hidden until the vengeance is overpast

SERMON XIV.

CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST.

"Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."—1 CORINTHIANS i. 6.

It is not always the most gifted church which is in the most healthy state. A church may have many rich, influential, or learned members; many that have the gift of utterance, and understand all sciences; yet that church may be in an unhealthy condition. Such was the case with the church at Corinth. Paul, in the opening of his epistle, tells them that he thanks God always on their behalf for the grace of God given unto them by Christ Jesus, that in every thing they were enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge, so that they were behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Corinthians were what we should call now-a-days, judging them by the usual standard, a first-class church. They had many who understood much of the learning of the Greeks; they were men of classic taste, and men of good understanding, men of profound knowledge, and yet in spiritual health that church was one of the worst in all Greece, and perhaps in the world. You would not find another church so low sunk among the whole of them as this one, although it was the most gifted. Now what should this teach us in the very outset? Should it not show us that gifts are nothing, unless they are laid on the altar of God? That it is nothing to have the gift of oratory, that it is nothing to have the power of eloquence, that it is nothing to have learning, that it is nothing to have influence, unless they all be dedicated to God, and consecrated to his service? I said it is "*nothing*;" I mean it is nothing good. Alas! it is worse

than nothing good; it is something evil, it is something dreadful, it is something terrible for a man to have these gifts, and yet to misuse them, for they shall only furnish fuel for a fiercer flame than he would have endured had he not such abilities. He who buries his ten talents may well expect to be given over to the tormentor. This is the lesson taught us. Let us never judge men by their talents—let us never estimate our fellows by externals—but by the use which they make of their powers; by the end to which they devote their talents by the kind of usury which they bring on those pounds which their Master has intrusted to them. St. Paul, in the commencement of his epistle, very gently hints at the right use of gifts and talents, and he tells us that they are sent to us, that we may "confirm the testimony of Christ Jesus." If we do not use them for this purpose, we misuse them; if we do not turn them to this account, we abuse them. We ought to use our endowments as the Corinthians did *not* use them; but as they ought to have done, in confirming the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Corinthians had more powers than any of us. Many of them could work miracles; they could heal the sick; they could restore the lepers; they could work wonders by the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost. Some of them could talk several languages, and wherever they went, they were all able to speak the language of the people among whom they abode; because they were not able to spend much time in learning languages, and there needed something to sustain the infant church. It was then but a sapling, it required a staff in the ground by its side, that it might lean upon it, might grow, and be strong. It was a little plant that needed to be sustained; and, therefore, God worked miracles; but now it is the stalwart oak, and has its roots bent round the stanchest rocks in creation; now it needs not any support by miracle, and therefore God has left us without extraordinary gifts. But whatever gifts we have, we are to use them for the purpose mentioned in the text, that is, for the confirmation of the testimony of Christ Jesus.

There are two points which we shall speak of as the Holy Spirit may enable us. First of all, *the testimony of Christ Jesus;* and, secondly, *what is meant by our confirming.*

I. First, then, *the testimony of Christ Jesus.* We are told in the text, that there was a testimony of Christ which was "confirmed in you." Our inquiry is, what is meant by the testimony of Christ.

That this world is fallen, is the first truth in all theology. "We have gone astray like lost sheep," and had there not been mercy in the mind of God, he might justly have left this world to perish without ever calling it to repentance; but he, in his wondrous long-suffering and his mighty patience, was not pleased so to do. Being full of tender mercies and loving-kindness, he determined on sending the Mediator into the world, whereby he might restore it again to its pristine glory, and might save for himself a people whom "no man could number," who are to be called the elect of God, loved with his everlasting love. In order that he might rescue the world, and save those elect ones, the Lord of Hosts has constantly ordained and sent forth a perpetual priesthood of testifiers. What was Abel with his lamb but the first martyred witness of the truth? Did not Enoch wear his mantle when he walked with God or prophesied the second advent? Was not Noah a preacher of righteousness among a gainsaying generation. The glorious succession never fails. Abraham comes from Ur of the Chaldees, and from the hour of his call till the day when he slept in Machpelah, he was a faithful witness. Then we might mention Lot in Sodom, Melchisedec in Salem, Isaac and Jacob in their tents, and Joseph in Egypt. Read the Scripture history, and can you fail to observe a golden chain of united links, hanging over a sea of darkness, but yet uniting Abel with the last of the patriarchs.

We are now arrived at a new era in the history of the church, but it is not destitute of light. See there the son of Amram, the honored Moses. That man was a very sun of brightness, for he had been where darkness vailed the unutterable light of the skirts of Jehovah. He climbed the steep sides of Sinai; he went up where the lightnings blazed, and the thunders lifted up their awful voice; he stood upon the mountain's burning summit; and there, in that secret chamber of the Most High, he learned in forty days, the witness of forty years, and was the constant enunciator of justice and right

eousness. But he died, as the best men must. Sleep on, O Moses, in thy secret grave! fear not for truth, for Joshua now declares: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The times of the judges and kings were sometimes densely darkened; but amid their civil wars, their idolatry, their persecutions, and their visitations, the chosen people still had a remnant, according to the election of grace. There were ever some who walked through the earth, like the ancient Druids in the woods, wrapped in white garments of holiness, and crowned with the glories of the Most High. The river of truth might run in a shallow stream, but it was never utterly dry. Next come to the times of the prophets; and there, after traversing a dreary period, when the world was only illumined here and there by such lamps as Nathan, Abijah, Gad, or Elijah, you find that you have come to the light of meridian day, or rather to a cloudless sky, crowded with stars. There is the eloquent Isaiah, the lamenting Jeremy, the soaring Ezekiel, the well-beloved Daniel, and, lo! behind these four high priests of prophecy, there follow twelve clothed in the same habiliments, performing the same service. I might style Isaiah the pole-star of prophecy; Jeremiah resembles the rainy Hyades of Horace; Ezekiel was the burning Sirius; and as for Daniel, he resembles a flaming comet, flashing on our vision but for a moment, and then lost in obscurity. I am not at a loss to find a constellation for the minor prophets: they are a sweet group, of intense brilliancy, even though but small: they are the Pleiades of the Bible. Perhaps at no former season were the stars of God marshaled in greater numbers; but yet, amid all preceding and succeeding gloom, the sky of time was never in total darkness; there was always a watcher, and a shining one, there. God has never abandoned the world, he has never quenched its lamp of testimony; he has never said "Go, thou vile thing," and spurned it from his foot. He might deluge it once with water; he might rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom; he might drown a nation in the sea; he might destroy a generation in the wilderness; he might devour kingdoms, and root them up; but never, never would he extinguish the perpetual flame of the testimony of truth.

I was thinking just now of a picture which I saw a few days ago; a beautiful painting of a brook, with stepping stones in the water, upon which the traveler crossed; and the idea has just flashed upon my mind—surely, the stream of man's wickedness, and the stream of time, may be crossed by those stepping-stones of testimony. There you have Noah, and he is a stepping-stone, to step to Abraham; and from him to Moses, and from Moses to Elijah; and so on, from Elijah to Daniel, from Daniel to Isaiah, and from Isaiah down to the brave Maccabees. And what is the last stepping-stone? It is Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness; the Lord of the kings of the earth. Jesus was, in one sense, the last testifier of truth. We are left to confirm it to others; and we shall just for a few moments enlarge on what the testimony of Jesus Christ was. First of all, in order to justify me in calling Jesus Christ a testifier, I want to refer to one or two passages of Scripture, where you will see that he came into this world to be a testifier and witness of the truth. Turn to the 3d chapter of John, and the 31st verse. John says: "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true." There we find John, who was the harbinger of our Saviour, speaking of Christ as giving testimony; speaking of him as one who came into the world for the special purpose of testifying to the truth. Turn further on, in the same book, and you will find, in the 8th chapter and 18th verse, our Saviour says this of himself: "I am one that bear witness of myself; and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." I refer you again to the 18th chapter of John and the 33d verse, where Pilate saith to Jesus Christ: "Art thou a king?" and he said: "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." There again you find our Saviour speaking of himself as a witness. Then I might refer you to some portions of Scripture in Isaiah, where he speaks of himself as a witness; but I will only keep to the works of our friend John; and we will now turn to the book

of Revelation. Turn to the 1st chapter and the 5th verse, and you find him saying: "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness." The 3d chapter of the same book, the 14th verse: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Now, then, I think I am not dishonoring my Master by calling him a "witness." I have placed him side by side with a glorious cloud of witnesses, and I have said he is the last witness; and I think I have not dishonored his blessed name, when I find he calls himself a "witness." Let us enlarge upon this head for a moment or two. Christ is the very king of witnesses; he is the greatest of all witnesses, and superior to every other. He does not differ from any other in the things he testifies, for they all testify to the same truth; but there is something in which this glorious witness is superior to every other.

First, let me remark, that Christ witnesses *directly for himself*, and that is one thing in which he is superior to all the rest of the prophets—and the other holy men who testified to the truth. What did Isaiah say? and what did Elijah say? or Jeremiah? or Daniel? They only said second-hand things, they spake what God had revealed to them. But when Christ spake, he always spake directly from himself. All the rest only spake that which they had received from God. They had to tarry till the winged cherub brought the live coal; they had to gird on the ephod and the curious girdle with its Urim and Thummim; they must stand listening till the voice saith—"Son of man, I have a message for thee." They were but instruments blown by the breath of God, and giving sounds only at his pleasure; but Christ was a fountain of living water, he opened his mouth and the truth gushed forth, and it all came directly from himself. In this, as a faithful witness, he was superior to every other. He could say—"What I have seen, and heard, that do I testify;" I have been inside the vail; I have entered into the sanctum sanctorum; I have dived into the depths, I have soared into the heights; there is not a place where I have not been, there is not a truth which I can not call mine own. I am no voice of another. I am He. In this respect he surpassed every other.

Secondly, Christ was superior to every other, from the fact, that his testimony was *uniform*. It was always the same testimony. We can not say *that* of any other. Look at Noah, he was a very good testifier to the truth, except once, when he was intoxicated; he was a sorry testifier to the truth then. David was a testifier to the truth, but he sinned against God, and put Uriah to death. What shall we say of Elijah, that man in shaggy garments? He was a testifier to the truth, but he was not so when he stood in the cave—"And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?" Abraham was another witness, but he was not so when he said his wife was his sister, and denied her. The same might be said of Isaac; and if you go through the whole list of holy men, you will find some fault in them; and we shall be obliged to say, they were very good testifiers, certainly, but their testimony is not uniform. There is a plague-spot which sin has left upon them all; there was something to show that man is nothing but an earthen vessel after all. But Christ's testimony was uniform. There never was a time when he contradicted himself; there never was an instance in which it could be said, "what you have said, you now contradict." See him everywhere, whether on the cold mountain-top at midnight, in prayer, or in the midst of the city; observe him when he walked through the cornfields on the Sabbath day, or when, on the ocean, he bid the waves "Be still," wherever he was, his testimony was uniform. This can not be said of any other. The best men have their faults. They say the sun has spots, and so I suppose the most glorious of men, whoever they are, who will shine most brightly in the firmament forever and ever, will have their spots while on earth. Christ's testimony was like his own coat, woven from the top throughout; there was not any seam in it at all; other men's coats have seams in them, but his testimony was uniform.

Yet, further, Christ's testimony was *perfect* in testifying to all truth. Other men only gave testimony to parts of truth, but Christ manifested it all. Other men had the threads of truth, but Christ took the threads and spun them into a tapestry, made them into a glorious robe, put it on, and came forth

clothed with every truth of God. There was more of God revealed by Christ than in the works of creation, or in all the prophets. Christ was a testifier to all God's attributes, and he left none of them unmentioned. Do you ask me whether Christ bore testimony to the justice of God: I tell you, yes. See him hanging there, languishing on Calvary, his bones all dislocated. Did he bear testimony to God's mercy? Yes. See those poor creatures who were limping there just now—the lame man leaping like a hart, the poor man beholding the the sun and rejoicing. Did he witness to the power of God? I say, yes. You see him standing in the prow of the ship, and saying to the winds—"Be still!" and holding them in the hollow of his hand. Has he not borne testimony to every thing in God? His testimony was perfect; nothing was left out; every thing was there. We could not say that of any other man. I believe we can not say that of any modern preacher. Some people say, I can hear Mr. So-and-so, because he preaches so much of doctrine, another likes all experience, and some want all practice. Very well, you do not expect that God has made one man to say every thing. Certainly not. One class of men defend one class of truths, and another, another. I bless God that there are so many denominations. If there were not men who differed a little in their creeds, we should never get so much gospel as we do. One man loves high doctrine, and he thinks he is bound to defend it every Sabbath. So much the better. Some do not speak of it at all, so that he helps to make up other people's deficiences. Some men are fond of fiery exhortations; they give them every Sabbath, and they can not preach a sermon without them. But, then, others do not give them at all, so that the lack of one is supplied by the other. God has sent different men to defend different kinds of truths. But Christ defended and preached all. He took them, bound them in one bundle, and said, "Here is myrrh, and spice, and aloes altogether, here is the whole truth"—Christ's testimony was perfect.

Mark, once more, before I come to the confirmation of this testimony, Christ's testimony was *final*. His was the last testimony, the last revelation that ever will be given to man After Christ, nothing. Christ comes last: he is the stepping

stone across the brook of time. All who come after him are only confirmers of the testimony of Christ. Our Augustins, our Ambroses, our Chrysostoms, or any other of the mighty preachers of olden times, they never pretended to say any thing fresh. They only revived the gospel—that same old fashioned gospel which Christ used to preach. And Luther and Calvin, and Zuingle, and Knox, they only came to confirm the truth. Christ said "*finis*" to the canon of revelation, and it was closed forever. No one can add a single word thereto, and no one can take a word therefrom. We Dissenters are sometimes charged with inventing a new gospel. We deny it. We say that our Owen, Howe, Henry, Charnock, Bunyan, Baxter, or Janeway, and all that galaxy of stars did not pretend to any thing new; they only preached the same thing over again, they only revived the things that Christ said, they only professed to be confirmers of the witness, and not witnesses. And so it has been with the great men we have lost during the last century. Whitefield and his brother evangelists, and men who stood in the same position as Gill, or Booth, or Rippon, or Carey, or Ryland, or some of those who have just been taken away—they did not pretend to any thing new. They only said, Brethren, we come to tell you the same old story; we have got just as much as God bestows; we are not testifiers of new things; we are only confirmers of the witness, Christ Jesus.

II. And now we come to the second part of our subject, and that is, *the testimony of Christ is to be confirmed in you* There are two points here—the testimony of Christ needs to be confirmed in ourselves, and it needs to be confirmed in others.

1. First, then, to every Christian the testimony of Christ needs to be confirmed in his own heart. O, beloved, that is the best confirmation of gospel truth which every Christian carries about within him. I love "Butler's Analogy," it is a very powerful book. I love "Paley's Evidences," but I never need them myself, for my own use. I do not want any proof that the Bible is true. Why? Because it is confirmed in me. There is a witness which dwells in me which makes me bid defiance to all infidelity, so that I can say:

"Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart."

I do not care to read books opposing the truths of the Bible I never want to wade through mire for the sake of washing myself afterward. When I am asked to read a heretical book I think of good John Newton. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, said to him: "Have you read my Key to the Romans?" "I have turned it over," said the doctor. "And is this the treatment a book must meet with which has cost me so many years' hard study; you ought to have read it carefully, and weighed deliberately what comes forward on so serious a subject." "Hold," said Newton, "you have cut me out full employment for a life as long as Methuselah's. My life is too short to be spent in reading contradictions of my religion. If the first page tells me the man is undermining truths, it is enough for me. If I had the first mouthful of a joint tainted, I do not want to eat it through to be convinced; I ought to send it away." Having the truth confirmed in us, we can laugh all arguments to scorn; we are plated in a sheet of mail when we have a witness within us to God's truth. All the men in this world can not make us alter one single iota of what God has written within us. Ah, brethren and sisters, we want to have the truth confirmed within is. Let me tell you a few things that will do this. First, the *very fact of our conversion* tends to confirm us in the truth. O, says the Christian, do not tell me there is no power in religion, for I have felt it. I was thoughtless like others; I laughed religion to scorn, and those who attended to it; my language was, Let us eat, drink, and enjoy the sunshine of life, but now through Christ Jesus I find the Bible a honeycomb, which hardly needs to be pressed to let the drops of honey run out; it is so sweet and precious to my taste that I wish I could sit down and feast on my Bible forever. What has made this alteration? That is how the Christian reasons. He says, there must be a power in grace, otherwise I never should be so changed as I am; there must be truth in the Christian religion, otherwise this change never would have come over

me. Some men have ridiculed religion and its followers, and yet divine grace has been so mighty, that those very men have become converted and felt the new birth. Such men can not be argued out of the truth of religion. You may stand and talk to them from dewy morn to setting eve, but you can never get them to believe that there is not truth in God's word. They have the truth confirmed in them.

Then, again, another thing confirms the Christian in the truth, and that is, when *God answers his prayers.* I think that this is one of the strongest confirmations of truth when we find God hears us. Now I speak to you, on this point, of things which I have tasted and handled. The wicked man will not believe this; he will say, Ah, go and tell those who know no better. I say, I have proved the power of prayer a hundred times, because I have gone to God, and asked him for mercies, and have had them. Ah, say some, it is only just in the common course of providence. "*Common course of providence!*" It is a blessed course of providence; if you had been in my position you would not have said that; I have seen it just as if God had rent the heavens, and put his hand out and said: "There, my child, is the mercy." It has come so plainly out of the way, that I could not call it a common course of providence. Sometimes I have been depressed and downcast, and even out of heart at coming to stand before this multitude, and I have said, what shall I do? I could fly anywhere rather than come here any more. I have asked God to bless me, and send me words to say, and then I have felt filled to the brim, so that I could come before this congregation or any other. Is that a common course of providence? It is a special providence—a special answer to prayer. And there be some here who can turn to the pages of their diary, and see there God's hand plainly interposing; we can say to the infidel, Begone! The truth is confirmed in us, and so confirmed that nothing can drive us out of it.

You have had the truth confirmed in you, my dear friends, when you have found great *support in times of affliction and tribulation.* Some of you have passed through trouble, for we can never expect a congregation which is free from it. Some of you have been tried and have been brought very

low; and can not you say with David: "I was brought low and the Lord helped me?" Can you not think how well you bore that last trouble? When you lost that child, you thought that you could not bear it so well as you did; but you said: "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Many of you have loved ones under the sod; your mother, father, husband, or wife. You thought your heart would break when you lost your parents; but is not the promise true—when thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up? He told thee, woman, that he would be a father to thy children, and hast thou not found it so? Canst thou not say, Not one good thing has failed of all the Lord has promised? That is the best confirmation of the truth of God. Sometimes persons come to me in the vestry, and they want me to confirm the truth outside of them. I can not do that; I want them to have the truth confirmed in them. They say, How do you know the Bible is true? O, I say, I never have to ask such a question as that now, because it is confirmed in me. The Bishop has confirmed me—I mean the "Bishop of souls;" for I never was confirmed by any other, and so confirmed me in the truth, that no one can confirm me out of it. I say, Try religion yourself, and you will see its power. You stop outside the house, and you want me to prove what is inside the house; go in yourself—taste and see that the Lord is good; O, it is a blessed thing to trust in him. This is the best way of confirming the truth.

2. The second thought was, that it was our business not only to have the truth confirmed in our own souls, but so to live that we might be the means of confirming the truth in others. Do you know what Bible the wicked and the worldly man reads? He does not read this Bible at all. He reads the Christian. "There," says he, "that man goes to church, and he is a member; I will see how he lives, I will read him up and down;" and he watches him and reads his conduct. "If he is bad," he says, "religion is a farce;" but if he is a man who lives up to it, he says, "There is something in religion after all." Wicked men do not read the Bible; they read Christians; they read professors and members. They watch

them, to see how they live, with a careful eye. Christians have got Argus with a hundred eyes staring on them. The wicked world looks at every fault with a magnifying glass, and they make the smallest molehill into the greatest mountain; and if there is a mote in our eye, they will make it into a beam, and they will say the man is a hypocrite at once. It is the duty of every child of God so to live, that he may confirm the witness of Christ. We should labor to do it in all the common things of daily life: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Some men think that religion lies in great things. It does not, it lies in little things. That man who died last night, and went to heaven; if you ask what his life was the day he died—why he ate, he drank, there was nothing particular about the day. Take any one day of our lives; we eat, drink, rise in the morning, go to bed at night, nothing very particular about the day. Our life is made up of little things, and if we are not careful of little things, we shall not be careful of great ones. If we do not take care of little things, the great ones must go wrong. O, may you have grace so to live that the world may find no fault in you; and if in little things they see an exactness and almost precision (and too much precision will be better than the looseness of the morals of some professors), then they will say, There is something in religion; that man's life has confirmed it in my mind, because he lives up to it.

Then, again, if you can bear the taunts of wicked men, without returning them, that will be a way of confirming religion. O, when I have entered into a controversy with some men, and have been betrayed into heat of temper, I could have bitten my fingers off that I should have done so. If you can keep your temper when men laugh at you, and if, when they revile you, you do not return it, you will confirm the truth. They will say, There is something in that man, otherwise he could not so keep his temper. You have read of James Haldane. Once, when unconverted, he threw a ship's tumbler at the head of a person who insulted him; but when regenerated on another occasion of insult, he simply said, "I would resent it, but I have learned to forgive injuries and overlook insults." Men were obliged to say of him,

"There is something in religion which can bring such a lion as that down, and make him such a lamb." Thus you will confirm the witness of Christ, if you bear up against persecution. If you can bear the laugh and jeer of wicked men patiently, you will confirm the truth.

Now, my friends, to close; the last confirmation you and I will ever be able to give to the witness of Christ is coming very soon. There is an hour when we shall no longer be able to confirm the truth; for we must die, and that is the best confirmation of a man's principles—when he dies well. One of the noblest confirmations of the Christian religion, is the fact that a man dies a peaceable, a happy, and a triumphant death. O, if when you come to die, you are able to say, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" and if you can grasp the tyrant Death in your hand and hurl him to the ground, and triumph in him who said, "O! Death, I will be thy plagues; O! Grave, I will be thy destruction!" If you can die without fear, or repining, or remorse, knowing that you are forgiven—if you can die with the song of victory on your lips, and with the smile of joy upon your countenance, then you will confirm the witness of Christ.

Once more, let me, in conclusion, urge you as followers of Christ Jesus, as those whom he has loved with an everlasting love; as heirs of immortality, as those who have been rescued from the pit of destruction, as professors of religion, as members of a Christian church, let me beseech you to make it your first and last object to confirm the witness of Christ. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, say within yourself, I must so live and die that I may confirm the witness of Christ. I must so walk among my friends and neighbors, that they will see there is a truth and a power in religion. And let me warn you not to undertake this in your own strength; you will want fresh power from on high from the Holy Ghost. Get a fresh supply of grace at the throne. You will want fresh power from the throne of heavenly grace. It is a good plan that some persons adopt; they walk home, and when they get there, they have a few minutes in prayer with their God. It is a blessed way of clenching the nail, and making a sermon tell. Ah, if you can go home and say—I solemnly vow, yet

I vow not in my own strength· but I solemnly vow by thy grace, that from this moment henceforward, it shall be my aim to live more as a confirmer of the truth! I did not know my high standing before, but I know now, that I am a confirmer of the truth. Lord, help me so to live that there may never be any flaw in my conduct, never any vile word proceed out of my lips—make me so to live that I may confirm the truth; Lord, help me to confirm the witness of Christ! Go and register that vow, and that resolution, and I seek God's grace that you may not let it lie there a vow uncarried out, but may you be able to live to the glory of God, and to the honor of his blessed name!

SERMON XV.

HARVEST TIME.

Is it not wheat harvest to-day?"—1 SAMUEL, xii. 17.

I SHALL not notice the connection; but I shall simply take these words as a motto, and my sermon will be founded upon a "harvest field." I shall rather use the harvest for my text than any passage that I find here. "Is it not wheat harvest to-day?" I suppose the dwellers in cities think less of times and seasons than dwellers in the country. Men who were born, trained up, nourished, and nurtured among cornfields, harvests, sowings, and reapings, are more likely to notice such things than you who are always engaged in mercantile pursuits, and think less of these things than rustics do. But I suppose, if it is almost necessary that you should less regard the "harvest" than others, it ought not to be carried to too great an extent. Let us not be forgetful of "times and seasons;" there is much to be learned from them, and I would refresh your memories this morning by a harvest field. What a wondrous temple this world is; for in truth it is a temple of God's building wherein men ought to worship him. What a wondrous temple it is to a mind spiritually enlightened, which can bring to bear upon it the resources of intellect and the illuminations of God's Holy Spirit! There is not a single flower in it that does not teach us a lesson; there is not a single wave or blast of thunder that has not some lesson to teach us, the sons of men. This world is a great temple; and as, if you walk in an Egyptian temple, you know that every mark and figure in the temple has a meaning, so when you walk this world you must believe that every thing about you has a meaning. It is no fanciful idea that there are "sermons in stones;" for there really are sermons in stones, and this

world is intended to teach us by every thing that we see. Happy is the man who only has the mind, and has the spirit to get these lessons from nature. Flowers, what are they? They are but the thoughts of God solidified, God's beautiful thoughts put into shape. Storms, what are they? They are God's terrible thoughts written out that we may read them. Thunders, what are they? They are God's powerful emotions, just opened out that men may hear them. The world is just the materializing of God's thoughts; for the world is a thought in God's eye. He made it first from a thought that came from his own mighty mind; and every thing in the majestic temple that he has made has a meaning.

In this temple there are four evangelists. As we have four great evangelists in the Bible, so there are four evangelists in nature; and these are the four evangelists of the seasons—spring, summer, autumn, winter.

First comes spring, and what says it? We look, and we behold that, by the magic touch of spring, insects which seemed to be dead begin to awaken, and seeds that were buried in the dust begin to lift up their radiant forms. What says spring? It utters its voice—it says to man, Though thou sleepest thou shalt rise again; there is a world in which in a more glorious state thou shalt exist; thou art but a seed now, and thou shalt be buried in the dust, and in a little while thou shalt arise. Spring utters that part of its evangile. Then comes summer. Summer says to man, Behold the goodness of a merciful Creator—"he makes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good," he sprinkleth the earth with flowers, he scattereth it with those gems of creation, he maketh it blossom like Eden, and bring forth like the garden of the Lord. Summer utters that; then comes autumn. We shall hear its message this morning. It passes—and fourth—comes winter crowned with a coronal of ice, and it tells us that there are times of trouble for man; it points to the fruits that we have stored up in autumn, and it says to us, Man, take heed that thou store up something for thyself—something against the day of wrath; lay up for thyself the fruits of autumn, that thou mayest be able to feed on them in winter. And when the old year expires, its death-knell tells us that man must die;

and when the year has finished its evangelistic mission, there comes another to preach the same lesson again.

We are about to let autumn preach this morning. One of these four evangelists comes forth, and it says—"Is it not wheat harvest to-day?" We are about to take the harvest into consideration, in order to learn something from it. May God's most blessed Spirit help his feeble dust and ashes to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to your soul's profit!

We shall talk this morning of *three joyful harvests* and of *three sorrowful harvests.*

First, we shall speak of three joyful harvests that there will be.

The first joyful harvest that I will mention is the harvest of the field which Samuel alluded to when he said, "Is it not wheat harvest to-day?" We can not forget the harvest of the field. It is not meet that these things should be forgotten; we ought not to let the fields be covered with corn, and to have their treasures stored away in the barns, and all the while to remain forgetful of God's mercy. Ingratitude, that worst of ills, is one of those vipers which makes its nest in the heart of man, and the adder never can be slain until divine grace comes there and sprinkles the blood of the cross upon man's heart. All vipers die when the blood of Christ is upon them. Let me just lead you for a moment to a harvest-field. You shall see there a most luxuriant harvest, the heavy ears bending down almost to touch the ground, as much as to say, From the ground I came; I owe myself to the ground; to that I bow my head, just as the good Christian does when he is full of years. He holds his head down the more fruit he has upon him. You see the stalks with their heads hanging down, because they are ripe. And it is goodly and precious to see these things. Now, just suppose the contrary. If this year the ears had been blighted and withered; if they had been like the second ears that Pharaoh saw, very lean and very scanty, what would have become of us? In peace we might have speculated on large supplies from Russia to make up the deficiency; now, in times of war, when nothing can come, what would become of us? We may conjecture, we may imagine; but I do not know that we are able to come to the

truth. We can only say, Blessed be God, we have not yet to reckon on what would have been; but, God, seeing one door closed, has opened another. Seeing that we might not get supplies from those rich fields in the south of Russia, he has opened another door in our land. Thou art my own favored island, says he; I have loved thee, England, with a special love; thou art my favored one, and the enemy shall not crush thee; and lest thou shouldst starve, because provisions are cut off, I will give thee thy barns full at home, and thy fields shall be covered, that thou mayest laugh thine enemy to scorn, and say to him, Thou thoughtest thou could starve us and make us afraid; but he who feeds the ravens has fed his people, and has not deserted his favored land. There is not one person here who is uninterested in this matter. Some say the poor ought to be thankful that there is abundance of bread. So ought the rich. There is nothing which happens to one member of society which does not affect all. The ranks lean upon each other; if there is a scarcity in the lower ranks, it falls upon the next, and the next, and even the queen upon her throne feels in some degree the scarcity, when God is pleased to send it. It affects all men. Let none say, whatever the price of corn may be, I can live; but rather bless God who has given you more than enough. Your prayer ought to be, "Give us this day our daily bread;" and remember, that whatever wealth you have, you must attribute your daily mercies as much to God as if you lived from hand to mouth; and sometimes that is a blessed way of living, when God gives his children the hand-basket portion, instead of sending it in a mass. Bless God that he has sent an abundant harvest! O, fearful one, lift up thy head! and thou discontented one, be abased, and let thy discontent no more be known! The Jews always had a feast of tabernacles when the harvest time came. In the country they always have a "harvest home;" and why should not we? I want you all to have one this day. Rejoice! rejoice! rejoice! for the harvest is come: "Is it not wheat-harvest to-day?" Poor desponding soul, let all your doubts and fears be gone. "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy waters shall be sure." That is one joyful harvest.

Now, the second joyful harvest is the harvest of every Christian. In one sense the Christian is the seed; in another, he is a sower. In one sense he is seed sown by God, which is to germinate, grow, and ripen till the great harvest time. In another sense, every Christian is a sower sent into the world to sow good seed, and to sow good seed only. I do not say that Christian men never sow any other seed than good seed. Sometimes, in unguarded moments, they take garlic into their hands instead of wheat; and we may sow tares instead of corn. Christians sometimes make mistakes, and God sometimes suffers his people to fall, so that they sow sins; but the Christian never reaps his sins; Christ reaps them for him. He often has to have a decoction made of the bitter leaves of sin; but he never reaps the fruit of it. Christ has borne the punishment. Yet bear in mind, my brethren, if you and I sin against God, God will take our sin, and he will get an essence from it that will be bitter to our taste; though he does not make us eat the fruits, yet still he will make us grieve and sorrow over our crimes. But the Christian, as I have said, should be employed in sowing good seed, and as such he shall have a glorious harvest. In some sense or other the Christian must be sowing seed. If God calls him to the ministry, he is a seed-sower; if God calls him to the Sabbath-school, he is a seed-sower; whatever his office, he is a sower of seed. Here I stand, Sabbath after Sabbath, and on week-days too, and sow seed, broadcast, all over this immense field; I can not tell where my seed goes. Some are like barren ground, and they object to the seed that I sow. Let them; I have no objection that any man should do so. I am only responsible to God, whose servant I am. There are others, and my seed falls upon them, and brings forth a little fruit; but by-and-by, when the sun is up, because of persecution, they wither away and they die. But I hope there are many here who are like the good ground that God has prepared, and when I scatter the seed abroad, it falls on good ground, and brings forth fruit to an abundant harvest. Ah! the minister has a joyful harvest, even in this world, when he sees souls converted. I have had a harvest time when I have led the sheep down to the washing of baptism; when I have seen

God's people coming out from the mass of the world, and telling what the Lord has done for their souls. When God's children are edified and built up, it is worth living for, and worth dying ten thousand deaths for, to be the means of saving one soul. What a joyful harvest it is when God gives us converted ones by tens and hundreds, and "adds to his church abundantly such as shall be saved." Now I am like a farmer just at this season of the year; I have got a good deal of wheat down, and I want to get it into the barn, for fear the rain comes and spoils it. I believe I have got a great many here, good pious Christian persons; but they will persist in standing out in the field. I want to get them into the barns. They are good people; but they do not like to make a profession and join the church. I want to get them into my Master's granary, and to see Christians added to the church. I see some holding down their heads and saying, he means me. So I do. You ought before this to have joined Christ's church; and unless you are fit to be gathered into Christ's little garner here on earth, you have no right to anticipate being gathered into that greater garner which is in heaven.

Every Christian has his harvest. The Sabbath-school teacher has his harvest. He goes, and he toils, and he plows very stony ground often; but he shall have his harvest. O, poor laboring Sabbath-school teacher, hast thou seen no fruit yet? Dost thou say, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Cheer up, my brother, thou dost labor in a good cause; there must be some to do thy work. Hast thou seen no children converted? Well, fear not, you can not expect to see the seed spring up very early; but remember—

"Though seed lie buried long in dust,
It sha'n't deceive your hope;
The precious grain can ne'er be lost,
For God insures the crop."

Go on sowing still, and thou shalt have a harvest when thou shalt see children converted. I have known some Sabbath-school teachers who could count a dozen or twenty, or thirty children who have one after another come to join the church, and know the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you should not live

to see it on earth, remember you are only accountable for your labor, and not for your success. So still toil on! "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it again after many days;" for God will not allow his word to be wasted: "It shall not return unto him void: it shall accomplish that which he pleases." But there is a poor mother who has been often sad. She has got a son or a daughter, and she has been always praying that God might convert their souls. Mother, thy son is an ungainly boy still; he grieves thy heart; still the hot tears scald thy cheeks on account of him. And thou, father, thou hast reproved him often; he is a wayward son, and he is still running the downward road. Cease not to pray. O, my brethren and sisters, who are parents, you shall have a harvest! There was a boy once, a very sinful child, who harkened not to the counsel of his parents; but his mother prayed for him, and now he stands to preach to this congregation every Sabbath. And when his mother thinks of her first-born preaching the gospel, she reaps a glorious harvest, that makes her a glad woman. Now, fathers and mothers, such may be your case. However bad your children are at present, still press toward the throne of grace, and you shall have a harvest. What thinkest thou, mother, wouldst thou not rejoice to see thy son a minister of the gospel; thy daughter teaching and assisting in the cause of God? God will not suffer thee to pray, and thy prayers be unheeded. Young man, thy mother has been wrestling for thee a long time, and she has not won thy soul yet. What thinkest thou, thou defraudest thy mother of her harvest. If she had a little patch of ground, hard by her cottage, where she had sown some wheat, wouldst thou go and burn it? If she had a choice flower in her garden, wouldst thou go and trample it under foot? Thou art going on in the ways of the reprobate; thou art defrauding thy father and thy mother of their harvest. Perhaps there are some parents who are weeping over their sons and daughters, who are hardened and unconverted. God turn their hearts! for bitter is the doom of that man who goes to hell over the road that is washed by his mother's tears, stumbles over his father's reproofs, and tramples on those things which God has put in his way—his

mother's prayers and his father's sighs. God help that man who dares to do such a thing as that! And it is wondrous grace if he does help him.

You shall have a harvest, whatever you are doing. I trust you are all doing something. If I can not mention what your peculiar engagement is, I trust you are all serving God in some way; and you shall assuredly have a harvest wherever you are scattering your seed. But suppose the worst: if you should never live to see the harvest in this world, you shall have a harvest when you get to heaven. If you live and die a disappointed man, you shall not be disappointed in the next world. I think how surprised some of God's people will be when they get to heaven. They will see their Master, and he will give them a crown. "Lord, what is that crown for?" "That crown is because thou didst give a cup of cold water to one of my disciples." What! a crown for a cup of cold water? "Yes," says the Master, "that is how I pay my servants. First I give them grace to give that cup of water; and then, having given them grace, I will give them a crown." "Wonders of grace to God belong." He that soweth liberally shall reap liberally; and he that soweth grudgingly shall reap sparingly. Ah! if there could be grief in heaven, I think it would be the grief of some Christians who have sown so very little. After all, how little the most of us ever sow. I know I sow but very little compared with what I might. How little any of you sow. Just add up how much you give to God in the year. I am afraid it would not come to a farthing per cent. Remember, you reap according to what you sow. O, my friends! what surprise some of you will feel when God pays you for sowing one single grain. The soil of heaven is rich in the extreme. If a farmer had such ground as there is in heaven, he would say, I must sow a great many acres of land; and so let us strive, for the more we sow, the more we shall reap in heaven. Yet remember, it is all of grace, and not of debt.

Now, beloved, I must very hastily mention the third joyful harvest. We have had the harvest of the field, and the harvest of the Christian. We are now to have another, and that is the harvest of Christ. Christ had his sowing times

What bitter sowing times were they! Christ was one who went out, bearing precious seed. O, picture Christ sowing the world! He sowed it with tears; he sowed it with drops of blood; he sowed it with sighs; he sowed it with agony of heart; and at last he sowed himself in the ground, to be the seed of a glorious crop. What a sowing time his was! He sowed in tears, in poverty, in sympathy, in grief, in agony, in woes, in suffering, and in death. He shall have a harvest too. Blessings on his name! Jehovah swears it; the everlasting predestination of the Almighty has settled that Christ shall have a harvest. He has sown, and he shall reap; he has scattered, and he shall win his prize. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." My friends, Christ has begun to reap his harvest. Yea, every soul that is converted is part of his reward; every one who comes to the Lord is a part of it. Every soul that is brought out of the miry clay and set on the King's highway, is a part of Christ's crop. But he is going to reap more yet. There is another harvest coming, in the latter day, when he shall reap armsful at a time, and gather the sheaves into his garner. Now men come to Christ in ones, and twos, and threes; but then they shall come in flocks, so that the church shall say, Who are these that come as doves to their windows?

There shall be a greater harvest time, when time shall be no more. Turn to the 14th chapter of Revelation and 13th verse: "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." They do not go before them, and win them heaven. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." That was Christ's harvest. Observe but one par

ticular: when Christ comes to reap his field, he comes with a crown on. O, see that crowned reaper on his throne! There are the nations gathered together:

"They come, they come, the ransomed tribes,
Where'er they rest or roam;
They heard his voice in distant lands,
And hastened to their home."

There they stand, one great army, before God. Then comes the crowned reaper from his throne: he takes his sharp sickle, and see him reap sheaf after sheaf, and he carries them up to the heavenly garner. Let us ask the question of ourselves, whether we shall be among the reaped ones—the wheat of the Lord? Notice again, that there was first a harvest, and then a vintage. The harvest is the righteous; the vintage is the wicked. When the wicked are gathered, an angel gathers them; but Christ will not trust an angel to reap the righteous. "He that sat on the throne thrust in his sickle." O, my soul! when thou comest to die, Christ will himself come after thee; when thou art to be cut down, he that sits upon the throne will cut thee down with a very sharp sickle, in order that he may do it as easily as possible. He will be the reaper himself; no reaper will be allowed to gather Christ's saints in, but Christ the King of saints. O! will it not be a joyful harvest, when all the chosen race, every one of them, shall be gathered in? There is a little shriveled grain of wheat there, that has been growing somewhere on the headland, and that will be there. There are a great many who have been hanging down their heads, heavy with grain, and they will be there too. They will all be gathered in:

"His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep;
All that his heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep."

But now we are obliged to turn to the three sad harvests. Alas, alas! the world was once like an Æolian harp; every wind that blew upon it gave forth melody. Now the strings are all unstrung, and they are full of discord, so that when we have the strains of joy, we must have the deep bass of grief to come after it.

The first sad harvest is the harvest of death. We are all living, and what for? For the grave. I have sometimes sat me down, and had a reverie like this: I have thought—man, what is he? He grows, he grows, till he comes to his prime, and when he is forty-five, if God spare him, perhaps he has then gained the prime of life. What does he do then? He continues where he is a little while, and then he goes down the hill; and if he keeps on living, what is it for? To die But there are many chances to one, as the world has it, that he will not live to be seventy. He dies very early. Do not we all live to die? But none shall die till they are ripe Death never reaps his corn green; he never cuts his corn till it is ripe. The wicked die; but they are always ripe for hell when they die: the righteous die; but they are always ripe for heaven when they die. That poor thief there, who had not believed in Jesus perhaps an hour before he died, he was as ripe as a seventy years' saint. The saint is always ready for glory whenever death, the reaper, comes; and the wicked are always ripe for hell whenever God pleases to send for them. O, that great reaper! he sweeps through the earth, and mows his hundreds and thousands down. It is all still; death makes no noise about his movements, and he treads with velvet footfall over the earth—that ceaseless mower, none can resist him. He is irresistible, and he mows, and mows, and cuts them down. Sometimes he stops and whets his scythe; he dips his scythe in blood, and then he mows us down with war; then he takes his whetstone of cholera, and mows down more than ever. Still he cries, More! more! more! Ceaseless that work keeps on. Wondrous mower! Wondrous reaper! O, when thou comest to reap me, I can not resist thee; for I must fall like others: when thou comest, I shall have nothing to say to thee. Like a blade of corn, I must stand motionless, and thou must cut me down! But, O! may I be prepared for thy scythe! May the Lord stand by me, and comfort me, and cheer me; and may I find that death is an angel of life—that death is the portal of heaven; that it is the outward porch of the great temple of eternity; that it is the vestibule of glory!

There is a second sad harvest, and that is the harvest that

the wicked man has to reap. Thus saith the voice of inspiration, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Now, there is a harvest that every wicked man has to reap in this world. No man ever sins against his *body* without reaping a harvest for it. The young man says, I have sinned with impunity: stay, thou young man! go there, to that hospital, and see the beings writhing in their disease. See that staggering, bloated wretch, and I tell thee, Stay thy hand, lest thou become like him! Wisdom bids thee stop; for thy steps lead down to hell. If thou enterest into the house of the strange woman, thou shalt reap a harvest. There is a harvest that every man reaps if he sins against his *fellows*. The man who sins against his fellow-creature shall reap a harvest. Some men walk through the world like knights, with spurs on their heels, and think they may tread on whom they please; but they shall find their mistake. He who sins against others, sins against himself—that is, nature. It is a law in nature, that a man can not hurt his fellows without hurting himself. Now, you who cause grief to others' minds, do not think the grief will end there: you will have to reap a harvest even here.

Again, a man can not sin against *his estate* without reaping the effects of it. The miserly wretch who hoards up his gold, he sins against his gold. It becomes cankered, and from those golden sovereigns he will have to reap a harvest; yes, that miserly wretch, sitting up at night, and straining his weary eyes to count his gold, that man reaps his harvest. And so does the young spendthrift: he will reap his harvest when all his treasure is exhausted. It is said of the prodigal, that "no man gave unto him"—none of those that he used to entertain—and so the prodigal shall find it: no man shall give any thing unto him. Ah! but the worst harvest will be that of those who sin against the *church* of Christ. I would not that a man should sin against his body; I would not that a man should sin against his estate; I would not that a man should sin against his fellows; but most of all, I would not have him touch Christ's church. He that touches one of God's people, touches the apple of his eye. When I have read of some people finding fault with the servants of the Lord, I have thought within myself, I would not do so. It is the greatest

insult to a man to speak ill of his children. You speak ill of God's children, and you will be rewarded for it in everlasting punishment. There is not a single one of God's family that God does not love, and if you touch one of them, he will have vengeance on you. Nothing puts a man on his mettle like touching his children; and if you touch God's church, you will have the direst vengeance of all. The hottest flames of hell are for those who touch God's children. Go on, sinner! laugh at religion if thou pleasest; but know that it is the blackest of sins in all the catalogue of crime. God will forgive any thing sooner than that; and though that is not unpardonable, yet, if unrepented of, it will meet the greatest punishment. God can not bear that his elect should be touched; and if you do so, it is the greatest crime you can commit.

Now we must conclude, by simply mentioning the third sad harvest; and that is the harvest of Almighty wrath, when the wicked at last are gathered in. In the 14th chapter of Revelation, you will see that God commanded the angel to gather the grapes, and they were all put into the wine-press together, and after that the angel came and trod them down until the blood ran out, so that it was up to the horses' bridles for the space of one hundred and twenty miles. Wonderful figure to express the wrath of God! Suppose, then, some great wine-press, in which our bodies are put like grapes, and suppose a mighty giant comes and treads us all under foot, that is the idea—that the wicked shall be cast together, and an angel shall crush them under foot until the blood runs out up to the horses' bridles. May God grant of his sovereign mercy that you and I may never reap such a harvest as that: that God may never reap us in that fearful harvest! but that rather we may be written among the saints of the Lord.

Concluding now, let me speak to the children of God once more; for that is the last thought I have upon my mind. You shall have a harvest in due season if you faint not. Sow on, brother—sow on, sister; and in due time thou shalt reap an abundant harvest. Let me tell you one thing before you go away, if the seed thou hast sown a long while has never come up. I was told once, "When you sow seeds in your garden, put them in a little water over night; they will grow all the

better for it." So, my brother, if thou hast been sowing thy seed, put them in tears, and it will make thy seed germinate the better. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Steep your seed in tears, and then put it into the ground, and you shall reap in joy. No bird can devour that seed; no bird can hold it in its mouth. No worm can eat it, for worms never eat seeds that are sown in tears. Go thy way, and when thou weepest most, then it is that thou sowest best. When most cast down, thou art doing best. If thou comest to the prayer meeting, and hast not a word to say, keep on praying, do not give it up, for thou often prayest best when thou thinkest thou prayest worst. Go on, and in due season, by God's mighty grace, you shall reap, if you faint not.

SERMON XVI.

SWEET COMFORT FOR FEEBLE SAINTS.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."—MATT., xii. 20.

BABBLING fame ever loves to talk of one man or another. Some there be whose glory it trumpets forth, and whose honor it extols above the heavens. Some are her favorites, and their names are carved on marble, and heard in every land, and every clime. Fame is not an impartial judge; she has her favorites. Some she extols, exalts, and almost deifies; others, whose virtues are far greater, and whose characters are more deserving of commendation, she passes by unheeded, and puts the finger of silence on her lips. You will generally find that those persons beloved by fame are made of brass or iron, and cast in a rough mold. Fame caresseth Cæsar, because he ruled the earth with a rod of iron. Fame loves Luther, because he boldly and manfully defied the Pope of Rome, and with knit brow dared laugh at the thunders of the Vatican. Fame admires Knox; for he was stern, and proved himself the bravest of the brave. Generally, you will find her choosing out the men of fire and mettle, who stood before their fellow-creatures fearless of them; men who were made of courage; who were consolidated lumps of fearlessness, and never knew what timidity might be. But you know there is another class of persons equally virtuous, and equally to be esteemed—perhaps even more so—whom fame entirely forgets. You do not hear her talk of the gentle-minded Melancthon; she says but little of him; yet he did as much, perhaps, in the Reformation, as even the mighty Luther. You do not hear fame talk much of the sweet and blessed Rutherford, and of the heavenly words

than distilled from his lips; or of Archbishop Leighton, of whom it was said, that he was never out of temper in his life. She loves the rough granite peaks that defy the storm-cloud; she does not care for the more humble stone in the valley, on which the weary traveler resteth; she wants something bold and prominent; something that courts popularity; something that stands out before the world. She does not care for those who retreat in shade. Hence it is, my brethren, that the blessed Jesus, our adorable Master, has escaped fame. No one says much about Jesus except his followers. We do not find his name written among the great and mighty men; though, in truth, he is the greatest, mightiest, holiest, purest, and best of men that ever lived; but because he was "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and was emphatically the man whose kingdom is not of this world; because he had nothing of the rough about him, but was all love; because his words were softer than butter, his utterances more gentle in their flow than oil; because never man spake so gently as this man; therefore he is neglected and forgotten. He did not come to be a conqueror with his sword, nor a Mohammed with his fiery eloquence, but he came to speak with a "still small voice," that melteth the rocky heart; that bindeth up the broken in spirit; and that continually saith, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden;" "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" Jesus Christ was all gentleness; and this is why he has not been extolled among men as otherwise he would have been. Beloved! our text is full of gentleness; it seems to have been steeped in love; and I hope I may be able to show you something of the immense sympathy and the mighty tenderness of Jesus, as I attempt to speak from it. There are three things to be noticed: first, mortal frailty; secondly, divine compassion; and thirdly, certain triumph—"till he send forth judgment unto victory."

I. First, we have before us a view of mortal frailty – bruised reed and smoking flax—two very suggestive metaphors, and very full of meaning. If it were not too fanciful—and if it is I know that you will excuse it—I should say that the *bruised reed is the emblem of a sinner in the first stage of his convic-*

tion. The work of God's Holy Spirit begins with bruising. In order to be saved, the fallow ground must be plowed up; the hard heart must be broken; the rock must be split in sunder. An old divine says there is no going to heaven without passing hard by the gates of hell—without a great deal of soul trouble and heart exercise. I take it then that the bruised reed is a picture of the poor sinner when first God commences his operations upon the soul; he is a bruised reed, almost entirely broken and consumed; there is but little strength in him. *The smoking flax I conceive to be a backsliding Christian;* one who has been a burning and a shining light in his day, but by neglect of the means of grace, the withdrawal of God's Spirit, and falling into sin, his light is almost gone out—not quite—it can never go out, for Christ saith, "I will not quench it;" but it becomes like a lamp when ill supplied with oil—almost useless. It is not quite extinguished; it smokes; it was a useful lamp once, but now it has become as smoking flax. So I think these metaphors very likely describe the contrite sinner as a bruised reed, and the backsliding Christian as smoking flax. However, I shall not choose to make such a division as that, but I shall put both the metaphors together, and I hope we may fetch out a few thoughts from them.

And first, the encouragement offered in our text applies to *weak ones.* What in the world is weaker than the bruised reed, or the smoking flax? A reed that groweth in the fen or marsh, let but the wild duck light upon it, and it snaps; let but the foot of man brush against it, and it is bruised and broken; every wind that comes howling across the river makes it shake to and fro, and well-nigh tears it up by the roots. You can conceive of nothing more frail and brittle, or whose existence depends more upon circumstances than a bruised reed. Then look at smoking flax—what is it? It has a spark within it, it is true, but it is almost smothered; an infant's breath might blow it out; or the tears of a maiden quench it in a moment; nothing has a more precarious existence than the little spark hidden in the smoking flax. *Weak things*, you see, are here described. Well, Christ says of them, "The smoking flax I will not quench: the bruised reed I will not break." Let me go in search of the weaklings. Ah! I shall

not have to go far. There are many in this house of prayer this morning who are indeed weak. Some of God's children, blessed be his name, are made strong to do mighty works for him; God hath his Samsons here and there who can pull up Gaza's gates, and carry them to the top of the hill; he hath here and there his mighty Gideons, who can go to the camp of the Midianites, and overthrow their hosts; he hath his mighty men, who can go into the pit in winter, and slay the lions; but the majority of his people are a timid, weak race. They are like the starlings, that are frightened by every passer by; a little fearful flock. If temptation comes, they fall before it; if trial comes, they are overwhelmed by it; their frail skiff is danced up and down by every wave; and when the wind comes, they are drifted along like a sea-bird on the crest of the billows; weak things, without strength, without force, without might, without power. Ah! dear friends, I know I have got hold of some of your hands now, and your hearts too; for you are saying, "Weak! Ah, that I am. Full often I am constrained to say, I would, but can not sing; I would, but can not pray; I would, but can not believe." You are saying that you can not do any thing; your best resolves are weak and vain; and when you cry, "My strength renew," you feel weaker than before. You are weak, are you? Bruised reeds and smoking flax? Blessed be God, this text is for you then. I am glad you can come in under the denomination of weak ones, for here is a promise that he will never break nor quench them, but will sustain and hold them up. I know there are some very strong people here—I mean strong in their own ideas. I often meet with persons who would not confess any such weakness as this. They have strong minds. They say, "Do you think that we go into sin, sir? Do you tell us that our hearts are corrupt? We do not believe any such thing; we are good, and pure, and upright; we have strength and might." To you I am not preaching this morning; to you I am saying nothing; but take heed—your strength is vanity, your power is a delusion, your might is a lie—for however much you may boast in what you can do, it shall pass away; when you come to the real contest with death, you shall find that you have no strength to grapple with

it: when one of these days of strong temptation shall come, it will take hold of you, moral man, and down you will go; and the glorious livery of your morality will be so stained, that though you wash your hands in snow water, and make yourselves never so clean, you shall be so polluted that your own clothes shall abhor you. I think it is a blessed thing to be weak. The weak one is a sacred thing; the Holy Ghost has made him such. Can you say, "No strength have I?" Then this text is for you.

Secondly, the things mentioned in our text are not only weak, but *worthless* things. I have heard of a man who would pick up a pin as he walked along the street, on the principle of economy; but I never yet heard of a man who would stop to pick up bruised reeds. They are not worth having. Who would care to have a bruised reed—a piece of rush lying on the ground? We all despise it as worthless. And smoking flax, what is the worth of that? It is an offensive and noxious thing; but the worth of it is nothing. No one would give the snap of a finger either for the bruised reed or smoking flax. Well, then, beloved, in our estimation there are many of us who are worthless things. There are some here, who, if they could weigh themselves in the scales of the sanctuary, and put their own hearts into the balance of conscience, would appear to be good for nothing—worthless, useless. There was a time when you thought yourselves to be the very best people in the world—when, if any one had said that you had more than you deserved, you would have kicked at it and said: "I believe I am as good as other people." You thought yourselves something wonderful, something extremely worthy of God's love and regard; but you now feel yourselves to be worthless. Sometimes you imagine God can hardly know where you are, you are such a despicable creature—so worthless—not worth his consideration. You can understand how he can look upon an animalcule in a drop of water, or upon a grain of dust in the sunbeam, or upon the insect of the summer evening; but you can hardly tell how he can think of you, you appear so worthless—a dead blank in the world, a useless thing. You say: "What good am I? I am doing nothing. As for a minister of the gospel, he is of some

service; as for a deacon of the church, he is of some use; as for a Sabbath-school teacher, he is doing some good; but of what service am I?" But you might ask the same question here. What is the use of a bruised reed? Can a man lean upon it? Can a man strengthen himself therewith? Shall it be a pillar in my house? Can you bind it up into the pipes of Pan, and make music come from a bruised reed? Ah! no; it is of no service. And of what use is smoking flax? The midnight traveler can not be lighted by it; the student can not read by the flame of it. It is of no use: men throw it into the fire and consume it. Ah! that is how you talk of yourselves. You are good for nothing, so are these things. But Christ will not throw you away because you are of no value. You do not know of what use you may be, and you can not tell how Jesus Christ values you after all. There is a good woman there, a mother, perhaps, she says: "Well, I don't often go out—I keep house with my children, and seem to be doing no good." Mother, don't say so; your position is a high, lofty, responsible one; and in training up children for the Lord, you are doing as much for his name as you eloquent Apollos, who so valiantly preached the word. And you, poor man, all you can do is to toil from morning till night, and earn just enough to enable you to live day by day, you have nothing to give away, and when you go to the Sabbath-school, you can just read, you can not teach much—well, but unto him to whom little is given of him little is required. Do you not know that there is such a thing as glorifying God by sweeping the street crossing? If two angels were sent down to earth, one to rule an empire, and the other to sweep a street, they would have no choice in the matter, so long as God ordered them. So God, in his providence, has called you to work hard for your daily bread; do it to his glory. "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to his honor." But, ah! I know there are some of you here who seem useless to the church. You do all you can; but when you have done it, it is nothing; you can neither help us with money, nor talents, nor time, and, therefore, you think God must cast you out. You think if you were like Paul or Peter you might be safe. Ah! beloved, talk not so; Jesus Christ

saith he will not quench the useless flax, nor break the worthless broken reed; he has something for the useless and for the worthless ones. But mark you, I do not say this to excuse laziness—to excuse those that can do, but don't; that is a very different thing. There is a whip for the ass, a scourge for idle men, and they must have it sometimes. I am speaking now of those who can not do it; not of Issachar, who is like a strong ass, crouching down between two burdens, and too lazy to get up with them. I say nothing for the sluggard, who will not plow by reason of the cold, but of the men and women who really feel that they can be of little service—who can not do more; and to such, the words of the text are applicable.

Now, we will make another remark. The two things here mentioned are *offensive* things. A bruised reed is offensive, for I believe there is an allusion here to the pipes of Pan, which you all know are reeds put together, along which a man moves his mouth, thus causing some kind of music. This is the organ, I believe, which Jubal invented, and which David mentions, for it is certain that the organ we use was not then in use. The bruised reed, then, would of course spoil the melody of all the pipes; one unsound tube would so let the air out, as to produce a discordant sound, or no sound at all, so that one's impulse would be to take the pipe out and put in a fresh one. And, as for smoking flax, the wick of a candle or any thing of that kind, I need not inform you, that the smoke is offensive. To me, no odor in all the world is so abominably offensive as smoking flax. But some say: "How can you speak in so low a style?" I have not gone lower than I could go myself, nor lower than you can go with me for I am sure you are, if God the Holy Ghost has really humbled you, just as offensive to your own souls, and just as offensive to God as a bruised reed would be among the pipes, or as smoking flax to the eyes and nose. I often think of dear old John Bunyan, when he said he wished God had made him a toad, or a frog, or a snake, or any thing better than a man, for he felt he was so offensive. O! I can conceive a nest of vipers, and I think that they are obnoxious; I can imagine a pool of all kinds of loathsome creatures, breed-

ing corruption, but there is nothing one half so worthy of abhorrence as the human heart. God spares from all eyes, but his own, that awful sight, a human heart; and could you and I but once see our heart, we should be driven mad, so horrible would be the sight. Do you feel like that? Do you feel that you must be offensive in God's sight—that you have so rebelled against him, so turned away from his commandments, that surely you must be obnoxious to him? If so, my text is yours.

Now, I can imagine some woman here this morning who has departed from the paths of virtue; and, while she is standing in the throng up there, or sitting down, she feels as if she had no right to tread these hallowed courts, and stand among God's people. She thinks that God might almost make the chapel break down upon her to destroy her, she is so great a sinner. Never mind, broken reed and smoking flax! Though thou art the scorn of man, and loathsome to thyself, yet Jesus saith to thee, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." There is some man here who hath something in his heart that I know not of—who may have committed crimes in secret, that we will not mention in public; his sins stick like a leech to him, and rob him of all comfort. Here you are, young man, shaking and trembling, lest your crime should be divulged before high heaven, you are broken down, bruised like a reed, smoking like flax. Ah! I have a word for thee, too. Comfort! comfort! comfort! despair not; for Jesus saith he will not quench the smoking flax, he will not break the bruised reed.

And yet, my dear friends, there is one thought before I turn away from this point. Both of these articles, however worthless they may be, *may yet be of some service.* When God puts his hand to a man, if he were worthless and useless before, he can make him very valuable. You know the price of an article does not depend so much upon the value of the raw material as upon workmanship put upon it. Here is very bad raw material to begin with—bruised reeds and smoking flax but by divine workmanship both these things become of wondrous value. You tell me the bruised reed is good for nothing; I tell you, no, Christ will take that bruised reed and

mend it up, and fit it in the pipes of heaven. Then when the grand orchestra shall send forth its music, when the organs of the skies shall peal forth their deep-toned sounds, we shall ask, "What was that sweet note heard there, mingling with the rest?" And some one shall say, "It was a bruised reed." Ah, Mary Magdalene's voice in heaven, I imagine, sounds more sweet and liquid than any other; and the voice of that poor thief, who said "Lord, remember me," if it is a deep bass voice, is more mellow and more sweet than the voice of any other, because he loved much, for he had much forgiven him. This reed may yet be of use. Do not say you are good for nothing; you shall sing up in heaven, yet. Do not say you are worthless; at last you shall stand before the throne among the blood-washed company, and shall sing God's praise. Ay, and the smoking flax, too, what good can that be? I will soon tell you. There is a spark in that flax somewhere; it is nearly out, but still a spark remaineth. Behold the prairie on fire! See you the flames come rolling on? See you stream after stream of hot fire deluging the plain till all the continent is burned and scorched—till heaven is reddened with the flame. Old night's black face is scarred with the burning, and the stars appear affrighted at the conflagration. How was that mass ignited! By a piece of smoking flax dropped by some traveler, fanned by the soft wind, till the whole prairie caught the flame. So one poor man, one ignorant man, one weak man, even one backsliding man, may be the means of the conversion of a whole nation. Who knows but that you who are nothing now, may be of more use than those of us who appear to stand better before God, because we have more gifts and talents? God can make a spark set a world on fire—he can light up a whole nation with the spark of one poor praying soul. You may be useful yet; therefore, be of good cheer. Moss groweth upon gravestones; the ivy clingeth to the moldering pile; the mistletoe groweth on the dead branch; and even so shall grace, and piety, and virtue, and holiness, and goodness, come from smoking flax and bruised reeds.

II. Thus then, my dear friends, I have tried to find out the parties for whom this text is meant, and I have shown you somewhat of mortal frailty; now I mount a step higher—to

divine compassion. "The bruised reed he will not break, the smoking flax he will not quench."

Notice what is first of all stated, and then let me tell you that Jesus Christ means a great deal more than he says. First of all, what does he say? He says plainly enough that he will not break the bruised reed. There is a bruised reed before me—a poor child of God under a deep sense of sin. It seems as if the whip of the law would never stop. It keeps on lash, lash, lash; and though you say "Lord, stop it, and give me a little respite," still comes down the cruel thong, lash, lash, lash. You feel your sins. Ah! I know what you are saying this morning: "If God continues this a little longer my heart will break; I shall perish in despair; I am almost distracted by my sin; if I lie down at night I can not sleep; it appears as if ghosts were in the room—ghosts of my sins—and when I awake at midnight, I see the black form of death staring at me, and saying, 'Thou art my prey, I shall have thee;' while hell behind seems to burn." Ah, poor bruised reed, he will not break you; conviction shall not be too strong, it shall be great enough to melt thee, and to make thee go to Jesus' feet; but it shall not be strong enough to break thy heart altogether, so that thou shouldst die. Thou shalt never be driven to despair; but thou shalt be delivered; thou shalt come out of the fire, poor bruised reed, and shalt not be broken.

So there is a backslider here this morning; he is like the smoking flax. Years gone by you found such happiness in the ways of the Lord, and such delight in his service, that you said, "There I would for ever stay.

> "'What peaceful hours I then enjoyed;
> How sweet their memory still!
> But they have left an aching void,
> The world can never fill.'"

You are smoking, and you think God will put you out. If I were an Arminian, I should tell you that he would; but being a believer in the Bible, and nothing else, I tell you that he will not quench you. Though you are smoking, you shall not die. Whatever your crime has been, the Lord says, "Return ye backsliding children of men, for I will have mercy upon

you." He will not cast thee away, poor Ephraim; only come back to him—he will not despise thee, though thou hast plunged thyself in the mire and dirt, though thou art covered from head to foot with filthiness; come back, poor prodigal! come back, come back! Thy Father calls thee. Hearken poor backslider! Come at once to him whose arms are ready o receive thee.

It says he will not quench—he will not break. But there is more under cover than we see at first sight. When Jesus says he will not break, he means more than that; he means, "I will take that poor bruised reed; I will plant it hard by the rivers of waters, and (miracle of miracles) I will make it grow into a tree whose leaf shall not wither; I will water it every moment; I will watch it; there shall be heavenly fruits upon it; I will keep the birds of prey from it; but the birds of heaven, the sweet songsters of paradise shall make their dwellings in the branches." When he says that he will not break the bruised reed, he means more; he means that he will nourish, that he will help, and strengthen, and support, and glorify—that he will execute his commission on it, and make it glorious forever And when he says to the backslider that he will not quench him, he means more than that—he means that he will fan him up to a flame. Some of you, I dare say, have gone home from chapel and found that your fire had gone nearly out; I know how you deal with it; you blow gently at the single spark, if there is one, and lest you should blow too hard, you hold your fingers before it; and if you were alone and had but one match, or one spark in the tinder, how gently would you blow it. So, backslider, Jesus Christ deals with thee; he does not put thee out; he blows gently; he says, "I will not quench thee;" he means, "I will be very tender, very cautious, very careful;" he will put on dry material, so that by-and-by a little spark shall come to a flame, and blaze up toward heaven, and great shall be the fire thereof.

Now I want to say one or two things to Little-Faith this morning. The little children of God who are here mentioned as being bruised reeds or smoking flax are just as safe as the great saints of God. I wish for a moment to expand this thought, and then I will finish with the other head. These

saints of God who are called bruised reeds and smoking flax are just as safe as those who are mighty for their Master, and great in strength, for several reasons. First of all, *the little saint is just as much God's elect as the great saint.* When God chose his people, he chose them all at once, and altogether; and he elected one just as much as the other. If I choose a certain number of things, one may be less than the rest, but one is as much chosen as the other; and so Mrs. Fearing and Miss Despondency are just as much elected as Great-Heart, or Old Father Honest. Again: *the little ones are redeemed equally with the great ones;* the feeble saints cost Christ as much suffering as the strong ones; the tiniest child of God could not have been purchased with less than Jesus' precious blood; and the greatest child of God did not cost him more. Paul did not cost any more than Benjamin—I am sure he did not—for I read in the Bible that "*there is no difference.*" Besides, when of old they came to pay their redemption money, every person brought a shekel. The poor shall bring no less, and the rich shall bring no more than just a shekel. The same price was paid for the one as the other. Now then, little child of God, take that thought to thy soul. You see some men very prominent in Christ's cause—and it is very good that they should be—but they did not cost Jesus a farthing more than you did; he paid the same price for you that he paid for them. Recollect again, *you are just as much a child of God as the greatest saint.* Some of you have five or six children. There is one child of yours, perhaps, who is very tall and handsome, and has, moreover, gifts of mind; you have another child who is the smallest of the family, perhaps has but little intellect and understanding. But which is the most your child? "The most!" you say; "both alike are my children, certainly, as much one as the other." And so, dear friends, you may have very little learning, you may be very dark about divine things, you may but "see men as trees walking," but you are as much the children of God as those who have grown to the stature of men in Christ Jesus. Then remember, poor tried saint, that *you are just as much justified as any other child of God.* I know that I am completely justified.

"His blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

I want no other garments, save Jesus' doings, and his imputed righteousness.

The boldest child of God wants no more; and I, who am "less than the least of all saints," can be content with no less, and I shall have no less. O Ready-to-Halt, thou art as much justified as Paul, Peter, John the Baptist, or the loftiest saint in heaven. There is no difference in that matter. O! take courage and rejoice.

Then one thing more. *If you were lost, God's honor would be as much tarnished, as if the greatest one were lost.* A queer thing I once read in an old book about God's children and people being a part of Christ and in union with him. The writer says—"A father sitteth in his room, and there cometh in a stranger: the stranger taketh up a child on his knee, and the child hath a sore finger: so he saith, 'My child, you have a sore finger;' 'Yes!' 'Well, let me take it off, and give thee a golden one!' The child looketh at him and saith, 'I will not go to that man any more, for he talks of taking off my finger; I love my own finger, and I will not have a golden one instead of it.' So the saint saith, 'I am one of the members of Christ, but I am like a sore finger, and he will take me off and put a golden one on.' 'No,' said Christ, 'No, no; I can not have any of my members taken away; if the finger be a sore one, I will bind it up; I will strengthen it.'" Christ can not allow a word about cutting his members off. If Christ lost one of his people, he would not be a whole Christ any longer. If the meanest of his children could be cast away, Christ would lack a part of his fullness; yea, Christ would be incomplete without his church. If one of his children must be lost, it would be better that it should be a great one, than a little one. If a little one were lost, Satan would say, "Ah! you save the great ones, because they had strength, and could help themselves; but the little one that has no strength, you could not save him." You know what Satan would say; but God would shut Satan's mouth, by proclaiming "They are all here, Satan; in spite of thy malice, they are all here; every one is safe; now lie down in thy den forever,

and be bound eternally in chains, and smoke in fire!" So shall *he* suffer eternal torment but not one child of God ever shall.

One thought more, and I shall have done with this head. *The salvation of great saints often depends upon the salvation of little ones.* Do you understand that? You know that my salvation, or the salvation of any child of God, looking at second causes, very much depends upon the conversion of some one else. Suppose your mother is the means of your conversion, you would, speaking after the manner of men, say that your conversion depended upon hers; for her being converted, made her the instrument of bringing you in. Suppose such and such a minister to be the means of your calling; then your conversion, in some sense, though not absolutely, depends upon his. So it often happens, that the salvation of God's mightiest servants, depends upon the conversion of little ones. There is a poor mother; no one ever knows any thing about her; she goes to the house of God; her name is not in the newspapers, or anywhere else; she teaches her child, and brings him up in the fear of God; she prays for that boy; she wrestles with God, and her tears and prayers mingle together. The boy grows up. What is he? A missionary—a William Knibb—a Moffatt—a Williams. But you do not hear any thing about the mother. Ah! but if the mother had not been saved, where would the boy have been? Let this cheer the little ones; and may you rejoice that he will nourish and cherish you, though you are like bruised reeds and smoking flax.

III. Now, to finish up, there is certain victory. "Until he bringeth forth judgment unto victory."

Victory! There is something beautiful in that word. The death of Sir John Moore, in the Peninsular war, was very touching: he fell in the arms of triumph; and sad as was his fate, I doubt not that his eye was lit up with luster by the shout of victory. So also, I suppose, that Wolfe spoke a truth, when he said, "I die happy"—having just before heard the shout, "they run, they run." I know victory, even in that bad sense—for I look not upon earthly victories as of any value—must have cheered the warrior. But, ah! how cheered

the saint, when he knows that victory is his! I shall fight during all my life, but I shall write "*vici*" on my shield. I shall be "more than conqueror through him that loved me." Each feeble saint shall win the day; each man upon his crutches; each lame one; each one full of infirmity, sorrow, sickness, and weakness, shall gain the victory. "They shall come with singing into Sion; as well the blind, and lame, and halt, and the woman with child, together." So saith the Scripture. Not one shall be left out; but he shall "bring forth judgment unto victory." Victory! victory! victory! This is the lot of each Christian: he shall triumph through his dear Redeemer's name.

Now a word about this victory. I speak first to aged men and women. Dear brethren and sisters—you are often, I know, like the bruised reed. Coming events cast their shadows before them; and death casts the shadow of old age on you. You feel the grasshopper to be a burden; you feel full of weakness and decay; your frame can hardly hold together. Ah! you have here a special promise. "The bruised reed I will not break." "I will strengthen thee." "When thy heart and thy flesh faileth, I will be the strength of thy heart and thy portion forever."

> "Even down to old age, all my people shall prove
> My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
> And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
> Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

Tottering on thy staff, leaning, feeble, weak, and wan; fear not the last hour; that last hour shall be thy best; thy last day shall be a consummation devoutly to be wished. Weak as thou art, God will temper the trial of thy weakness; he will make thy pain less, if thy strength be less; but thou shalt sing in heaven, "Victory! victory! victory!" There are some of us who could wish to change places with you, to be so near heaven—to be so near home. With all your infirmities, your gray hairs are a crown of glory to you; for you are near the end, as well as in the way of righteousness.

A word with you middle-aged men, battling in this life's rough storm. You are often bruised reeds, your religion is

so encumbered by your worldly callings, so covered up by the daily din of business, business, business, that you seem like smoking flax; it is as much as you can do to serve your God, and you can not say that you are "fervent in spirit," as well as "diligent in business." Man of business, toiling and striving in this world, he will not quench thee when thou art like smoking flax; he will not break thee when thou art like the bruised reed; but will deliver thee from thy troubles, thou shalt swim across the sea of life, and shalt stand on the happy shore of heaven, and shalt sing, "Victory" through him that loved thee.

Ye youths and maidens! I speak to you, and have a right to do so. You and I ofttimes know what the bruised reed is, when the hand of God blights our fair hopes. We are full of giddiness and waywardness, it is only the rod of affliction that can bring folly out of us, for we have much of it in us. Slippery paths are the paths of youth, and dangerous ways are the ways of the young, but God will not break or destroy us. Men, by their over caution, bid us never tread a step, lest we fall; but God bids us go, and make our feet like hinds' feet, that we may tread upon high places. Serve God in early days; give your hearts to him, and then he will never cast you out, but will nourish and cherish you.

Let me not finish without saying a word to little children. You who have heard of Jesus, he says to you, "The bruised reed I will not break; the smoking flax I will not quench." I believe there is many a little prattler, not six years old, who knows the Saviour. I never despise infantile piety; I love it. I have heard little children talk of mysteries that gray-headed men knew not. Ah! little children who have been brought up in Sabbath-schools, and love the Saviour's name, if others say you are too forward, do not fear, love Christ still

> "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Still will look upon a child;
> Pity thy simplicity,
> And suffer thee to come to him."

He will not cast thee away; for smoking flax he will not quench, and the bruised reed he will not break.

SERMON XVII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."—Acts, xxiv. 15.

Reflecting the other day upon the sad state of the churches at the present moment, I was led to look back to apostolic times, and to consider wherein the preaching of the present day differed from the preaching of the apostles. I remarked the vast difference in their style from the set and formal oratory of the present age. I remarked that the apostles did not take a text when they preached, nor did they confine themselves to one subject, much less to any place of worship; but I find that they stood up in any place and declared from the fullness of their heart what they knew of Jesus Christ. But the main difference I observed was in the *subjects* of their preaching. Surprised I was when I discovered that the very staple of the preaching of the apostles was the resurrection of the dead. I found myself to have been preaching the doctrine of the grace of God; to have been upholding free election; to have been leading the people of God, as well as I was enabled, into the deep things of his word; but I was surprised to find that I had not been copying the apostolic fashion half as nearly as I might have done. The apostles, when they preached, always testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent resurrection of the dead. It appears that the alpha and omega of their gospel was the testimony that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. When they chose another apostle in the room of Judas, who had become apostate (Acts, i. 22), they said, "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his

resurrection;" so that the very office of an apostle was to be a witness of the resurrection. And well did they fulfill their office. When Peter stood up before the multitude, he declared unto them that "David spoke of the resurrection of Christ." When Peter and John were taken before the council, the great cause of their arrest was that the rulers were grieved "because they taught the people, and preached through Jesus Christ the resurrection from the dead." (Acts, iv. 2.) When they were set free, after having been examined, it is said, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." (Acts, iv. 33.) It was this which stirred the curiosity of the Athenians when Paul preached among them. "They said, he seemeth to be a setter-forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection of the dead." And this moved the laughter of the Areopagites, for when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." Truly did Paul say, when he stood before the council of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And equally truly did he constantly assert, "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." The resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of the righteous is a doctrine which we believe, but which we too seldom preach or care to read about. Though I have inquired of several booksellers for a book specially upon the subject of the resurrection, I have not yet been able to purchase one of any sort whatever; and when I turned to Dr. Owen's works, which are a most invaluable storehouse of divine knowledge, containing much that is valuable on almost every subject, I could find, even there, scarcely more than the slightest mention of the resurrection. It has been set down as a well-known truth, and therefore has never been discussed. Heresies have not risen up respecting it; it would almost have been a mercy if there had been, for whenever a truth is contested by heretics, the orthodox fight strongly for it, and the pulpit resounds with it every day. I am persuaded, however, that there is much power in this doctrine; and if I

preach it this morning you will see that God will own the apostolic preaching, and there will be conversions. I intend putting it to the test now to see whether there be not something which we can not perceive at present in the resurrection of the dead, which is capable of moving the hearts of men and bringing them into subjection to the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There are very few Christians who believe the resurrection of the dead. You may be surprised to hear that, but I should not wonder if I discovered that you yourself have doubts on the subject. By the resurrection of the dead is meant something very different from the immortality of the soul; that, every Christian believes, and therein are only on a level with the heathen, who believe it too. The light of nature is sufficient to tell us that the soul is immortal, so that the infidel who doubts it is a worse fool than a heathen, for he, before revelation was given, had discovered it. There are some faint glimmerings in men of reason which teach that the soul is something so wonderful that it must endure forever. But the resurrection of the dead is quite another doctrine, dealing not with the soul, but with the body. The doctrine is that this actual body in which I now exist is to live with my soul; that not only is the "vital spark of heavenly flame" to burn in heaven, but the very censer in which the incense of life doth smoke is holy unto the Lord, and is to be preserved forever. The spirit, every one confesses, is eternal; but how many there are who deny that the bodies of men will actually start up from their graves at the great day! Many of you believe you will have a body in heaven, but you think it will be an airy, fantastic body, instead of believing that it will be a body like to this—flesh and blood (although not the same kind of flesh, for all flesh is not the same flesh), a solid, substantial body, even such as we have here. And there are yet fewer of you who believe that the wicked will have bodies in hell; for it is gaining ground everywhere that there are to be no positive torments for the damned in hell to affect their bodies, but that it is to be metaphorical fire, metaphorical brimstone, metaphorical chains, metaphorical torture. But if you were Christians, as you profess to be, you would believe that every mortal man

who ever existed shall not only live by the immortality of his soul, but his *body* shall live again; that the very flesh in which he now walks the earth is as eternal as the soul, and shall exist forever. That is the peculiar doctrine of Christianity. The heathens never guessed or imagined such a thing; and consequently when Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "some mocked," which proves that they understood him to speak of the resurrection of the body, for they would not have mocked had he only spoken of the immortality of the soul, that having been already proclaimed by Plato and Socrates, and received with reverence.

We are now about to preach that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. We shall consider first *the resurrection of the just;* and secondly, *the resurrection of the unjust.*

I. There shall be A RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

The first proof I will offer of this is that it has been the *constant and unvarying faith of the saints from the earliest periods of time.* Abraham believed the resurrection of the dead, for it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter xi. verse 10, that he "accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." I have no doubt that Joseph believed in the resurrection, for he gave commandment concerning his bones and surely he would not have been so careful of his body if he had not believed that it should be raised from the dead. The Patriarch Job was a firm believer in it, for he said, in that oft repeated text, Job, xix. 25, 26: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." David believed it beyond a shadow of a doubt, for he sang of Christ, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption." Daniel believed it, for he said, that "many who sleep in the dust shall rise, some to everlasting shame, and some to everlasting contempt." Souls do not sleep in the dust; bodies do. It will do you good to turn to one or two passages and see what these holy men thought. For instance, in Isaiah, xxvi. 19, you read: "Thy dead men shall live,

together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." We will offer no explanation. The text is positive and sure. Let another prophet speak—Hosea, vi. 1, 2: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Although this does not declare the resurrection, yet it uses it as a figure, which it would not do were it not regarded as a settled truth. It is declared by Paul, also, in Hebrews, xi. 35, that such was the constant faith of the martyrs; for he says, "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." All those holy men and women, who, during the time of the Maccabees, stood fast by their faith, and endured the fire and sword, and tortures unutterable, believed in the resurrection, and that resurrection stimulated them to give their bodies to the flames, not caring even for death, but believing that thereby they should attain to a blessed resurrection. But our Saviour brought the resurrection to light in the most excellent manner, for he explicitly and frequently declared it "Marvel not," said he, "at what I have said unto you. Behold the hour cometh when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of God." "The hour is coming when he will call the dead to judgment, and they shall stand before his throne." Indeed, throughout his preaching, there was one continued flow of firm belief, and a public and positive declaration of the resurrection of the dead. I will not trouble you with any passages from the writings of the apostles: they abound therewith. In fact, Holy Scripture is so full of this doctrine that I marvel, brethren, that we should so soon have departed from the steadfastness of our faith, and that it should be believed in many churches that the actual bodies of the saints will not live again, and especially that the bodies of the wicked will not have a future existence. We maintain, as our text doth, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

A second proof, we think, we find in the *translation of*

Enoch and Elijah to heaven. We read of two men who went to heaven in their bodies. Enoch "was not; for God took him;" and Elijah was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Neither of these men left his ashes in the grave; neither left his body to be consumed by the worm, but both of them in their mortal frames (changed and glorified doubtless) ascended up on high. Now, those two were the pledge to us that all of us shall rise in the same manner. Would it be likely that two bright spirits would sit in heaven clothed in flesh, while the rest of us were unclothed? Would it be at all reasonable that Enoch and Elijah should be the only saints who should have their bodies in heaven, and that we should be there only in our souls—poor souls! longing to have our bodies again. No; our faith tells us that these two men having safely gone to heaven, as John Bunyan hath it, by a bridge that no one else trod, by which they were not under the necessity to wade the river, we shall also rise from the flood, and our flesh shall not forever dwell with corruption.

There is a remarkable passage in Jude, where it speaks of Michael the archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses, and using no "railing accusation." Now, this refers to the great doctrine of *angels watching over the bones of the saints.* Certainly, it tells us that the body of Moses was watched over by a great archangel; the devil thought to disturb that body, but Michael contended with him about it. Now would there be a contention about that body if it had been of no value? Would Michael contend for that which was only to be the food of worms? Would he wrestle with the enemy for that which was to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, never to be united again into a new and goodlier fabric? No; assuredly not. From this we learn that an angel watches over every tomb. It is no fiction, when on the marble we carve the cherubs with their wings. There are cherubs with outstretched wings over the head of the grave-stones of all the righteous; ay, and where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," in some nook o'ergrown by nettles, there an angel standeth nigh' and day to watch each bone and guard each atom, that at the resurrection those bodies, with more glory than they had on earth, may start up to dwell

forever with the Lord. The guardianship of the bodies of the saints by angels proves that they shall rise again from the dead.

Yet, further, the *resurrections that have already taken place* give us hope and confidence that there shall be a resurrection of all saints. Do you not remember that it is written, when Jesus rose from the dead many of the saints that were in their graves arose, and came into the city, and appeared unto many? Have you not heard that Lazarus, though he had been dead three days, came from the grave at the word of Jesus? Have you never read how the daughter of Jairus awoke from the sleep of death when he said, "*Talitha, cumi?*" Have you never seen him at the gates of Nain, bidding that widow's son rise from the bier? Have you forgotten that Dorcas, who made garments for the poor, sat up and saw Peter after she had been dead? And do you not remember Eutychus who fell from the third loft and was taken up dead, but who, at the prayer of Paul, was raised again? Or, does not your memory roll back to the time when hoary Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child, and the child breathed, and sneezed seven times, and his soul came to him? Or have you not read that when they buried a man, as soon as he touched the prophet's bones he rose again to life? These are pledges of the resurrection; a few specimens, a few chance gems flung into the world to tell us how full God's hand is of resurrection jewels. He hath given us proof that he is able to raise the dead, by the resurrection of a few, who afterward were seen on earth by infallible witnesses.

We must now, however, leave these things, and refer you once more to the Holy Spirit by way of confirming the doctrine that the saints' bodies shall rise again. The chapter in which you will find one great proof is in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, vi. 13: "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." *The body, then, is the Lord's.* Christ died not only to save my soul, but to save my body. It is said "he came to seek and to save that which was lost." When Adam sinned, he lost his body, and he lost his soul too; he was a lost man, lost altogether. And when Christ came to save his people, he came to save their

bodies and their souls. "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Is this body for the Lord, and shall death devour it? Is this body for the Lord, and shall winds scatter its particles far away where they never shall discover their fellows? No! the body is for the Lord, and the Lord shall have it. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us by his own power." Now look at the next verse, "Know ye not that *your bodies are the members of Christ?*" Not merely is the soul a part of Christ—united to Christ, but the body is also. These hands, these feet, these eyes, are members of Christ, if I be a child of God. I am one with him, not merely as to my mind, but one with him as to this outward frame. The very body is taken into union. The golden chain which binds Christ to his people goes round the body and soul too. Did not the apostle say, "they two shall be *one flesh.* This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church?" (Ephesians, v. 31, 32.) "They are one flesh;" and Christ's people are not only one with him in spirit, but they are "one flesh" too. The flesh of man is united with the flesh of the God-man; and our bodies are members of Jesus Christ. Well, while the head lives the body can not die; and while Jesus lives the members can not perish. Further, the apostle says, in the 19th verse, "Know ye not that *your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost* which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." This body, he says, is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and where the Holy Ghost dwells in a body, he not only sacrifices it, but renders it eternal. The temple of the Holy Ghost is as eternal as the Holy Ghost. You may demolish other temples, and their gods too, but the Holy Ghost can not die, nor "can his temple perish." Shall this body which has once had the Holy Ghost in it be always food for worms? Shall it never be seen more, but be like the dry bones of the valley? No; the dry bones shall live, and the temple of the Holy Ghost shall be built up again. Though the legs, the pillars, of that temple fail, though the eyes, the windows, of it be darkened, and those that look out of them see no more, yet God shall re-build this fabric, re-light the eyes, and restore its pillars, and regild it with beauty, yea,

"this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption."

But the master argument with which we close our proof is that *Christ rose from the dead:* and verily his people shall. The chapter which we read at the commencement of the service is proof to a demonstration, that if Christ rise from the dead all his people must; that if there be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen. But I will not long dwell on this proof, because I know you all feel its power, and there is no need for me to bring it out clearly. As Christ actually rose from the dead—flesh and blood—so shall we. Christ was not a spirit when he rose from the dead; his body could be touched. Did not Thomas put his hand into his side? and did not Christ say, "Handle me, and see. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." And if we are to rise as Christ did—and we are taught so—then we shall rise in our bodies—not spirits, not fine aërial things, made of I know not what—some very fine and elastic substance; but "as the Lord our Saviour rose, so all his followers must." We shall rise in our flesh, "though all flesh is not the same flesh;" we shall rise in our bodies, though all bodies are not the same bodies; and we shall rise in glory, though all glories are not the same glories. "There is one flesh of man and another of beasts;" and there is one flesh of this body, and another flesh of the heavenly body. There is one body for the soul here, and another body for the spirit up there; and yet it shall be the same body that will rise again from the grave, the same, I say, in identity, though not in glory or in adaptation.

I come now to some practical thoughts from this doctrine before I go to the other.

My brethren, what thoughts of comfort there are in this doctrine, that the dead shall rise again. Some of us have this week been standing by the grave; and one of our brethren, who long served his Master in our midst, was placed in the tomb. He was a man valiant for truth, indefatigable in labor, self-denying in duty, and always prepared to follow his Lord (Mr. Turner, of Lamb and Flag School), and to the utmost of his ability, serviceable to the church. Now, there were tears shed there: do you know what they were about? There was not

a solitary tear shed about his soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not required to give us comfort, for we knew it well, we were perfectly assured that he had ascended to heaven. The burial service used in the Church of England most wisely offers us no comfort concerning the soul of the departed believer, since that is in bliss, but it cheers us by reminding us of the promised resurrection for the body; and when I speak concerning the dead, it is not to give comfort as to the soul, but as to the body. And this doctrine of the resurrection has comfort for the mourners in regard to the buried mortality. You do not weep because your father, brother, wife, husband, has ascended to heaven—you would be cruel to weep about that. None of you weep because your dear mother is before the throne; but you weep because her body is in the grave, because those eyes can no more smile on you, because those hands can not caress you, because those sweet lips can not speak melodious notes of affection. You weep because the body is cold, and dead, and clay-like; for the soul you do not weep. But I have comfort for you. That very body will rise again; that eye will flash with genius again; that hand will be held out in affection once more. Believe me, I am speaking no fiction. That very hand, that positive hand, those cold, clay-like arms that hung by the side and fell when you uplifted them, shall hold a harp one day; and those poor fingers, now icy and hard, shall be swept along the living strings of golden harps in heaven. Yes, you shall see that body once more.

"Their inbred sins require
Their flesh to see the dust,
But as the Lord their Saviour rose,
So all his followers must."

Will not that remove your tears. "He is not dead, but sleepeth." He is not lost, he is "seed sown against harvest time to ripen." His body is resting a little while, bathing itself in spices, that it may be fit for the embraces of its Lord.

And here is comfort for you, too, you poor sufferers, who suffer in your bodies. Some of you are almost martyrs with aches of one kind and another—lumbagoes, gouts, rheuma-

tisms, and all sorts of sad afflictions that flesh is heir to. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other; and if you were silly enough to be always doctoring yourselves, you might always be having the doctor in your house. Here is comfort for you. That poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without its agonies; that poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Ah! poor negro slave, every scar upon your back shall have a stripe of honor in heaven. Ah! poor martyr, the crackling of thy bones in the fire shall earn thee sonnets in glory; all thy sufferings shall be well repaid by the happiness thou shalt experience there. Don't fear to suffer in your frame, because your frame will one day share in your delights. Every nerve will thrill with delight, every muscle move with bliss; your eyes will flash with the fire of eternity; your heart will beat and pulsate with immortal blessedness; your frame shall be the channel of beatitude; the body which is now often a cup of wormwood, will be a vessel of honey; this body which is often a comb out of which gall distilleth, shall be a honeycomb of blessedness to you. Comfort yourselves, then, ye sufferers, weary languishers upon the bed: fear not, your bodies shall live.

But I want to draw a word of *instruction* from the text concerning the doctrine of recognition. Many have puzzled themselves as to whether they will know their friends in heaven. Well, now, if the bodies are to rise from the dead, I see no reason why we should not know them. I think I should know some of my brethren, even by their spirits, for I know their character so well, having talked with them of the things of Jesus, and being well acquainted with the most prominent parts of their character. But I shall see their bodies too. I always thought that a quietus to the question which the wife of old John Ryland asked: "Do you think," she said, "you will know me in heaven?" "Why," said he, "I know you here; and do you think I shall be a bigger fool in heaven than I am on earth?" The question is beyond dispute. We shall live in heaven with bodies, and that decides the matter. We shall know each other in heaven: you may take that for a positive fact, and not mere fancy

But now a word of *warning*, and then I have done with this part of the subject. If your bodies are to dwell in heaven, I beseech you take care of them. I do not mean to take care of what you eat and drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed; but I mean, take care that you do not let your bodies be polluted by sin. If this throat is to warble forever with songs of glory, let not words of lust defile it; if these eyes are to see the King in his beauty, ever let this be your prayer: "Turn off my eyes from beholding vanities;" if these hands are to hold a palm-branch, O, let them never take a bribe, let them never seek after evil; if these feet are to walk the golden streets, let them not be swift after mischief; if this tongue is forever to talk of all he said and did, ah! let it not utter light and frothy things; and if this heart is to pulsate forever with bliss, I beseech you give it not unto strangers, neither let it wander after evil. If this body is to live forever, what care we ought to take of it; for our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and they are members of the Lord Jesus.

Now, will you believe this doctrine or not? If you will not, you are excommunicate from the faith. This is the faith of the gospel: and if you do not believe it, you have not yet received the gospel. "For if the dead rise not, then your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." The dead in Christ *shall* rise, and they shall rise *first*.

II. But now we come to the RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED. Will the wicked rise too? Here is a point of controversy. I shall have some hard things to say now; I may detain you long, but I beg you, nevertheless, hearken to me. Yes, the wicked shall rise.

The first proof is given in the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, v. 10: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Now, since we are all to appear, the wicked must appear, and they will receive the deeds done in the body. Since the body sins, it is only natural that the body should be punished. It would be unjust to punish the soul and not the body, for the body has had as much to do with sin as ever the soul has had. But wherever I go now, I hear it said: "The

ministers in old times were wont to say there was fire in hell for our bodies," but it is not so; it is metaphorical fire, fancied fire. Ah! it is not so. You shall receive the things done in your body. Though your souls shall be punished, your bodies will be punished as well. You who are sensual and devilish, do not care about your souls being punished, because you never think about your souls; but if I tell you of bodily punishment you will think of it far more. Christ may have said that the soul should be punished; but he far more frequently described the body in misery in order to impress his hearers; for he knew that they were sensual and devilish, and that nothing that did not affect the body would touch them in the least. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or evil."

But this is not the only text to prove the doctrine; I will give you a better one, Matt. v. 29: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell"—not "thy whole *soul*," but "thy whole *body*." Man, this does not say that thy soul shall be in hell, that is affirmed many times, but it positively declares that *thy body* shall. That same body which is now standing in the aisle, or sitting in the pew, if thou diest without Christ, shall burn forever in the flames of hell. It is not a fancy of man, but a truth, that thy actual flesh and blood, and those very bones shall suffer—"thy whole body shall be cast into hell."

But lest that one proof should not suffice thee, hear another out of the same gospel, chapter x. 28: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and *body* in hell." Hell will be the place for bodies as well as souls. As I have remarked, wherever Christ speaks of hell, and of the lost state of the wicked, he always speaks of their bodies; you scarcely find him saying any thing about their souls. He says, "Where their worm dieth not," which is a figure of physical suffering—the worm torturing forever the inmost heart, like a cancer within the very soul He speaks

of the "fire that never shall be quenched." Now, do not begin telling me that that is metaphorical fire. Who cares for that? If a man were to threaten to give me a metaphorical blow on the head, I should care very little about it; he would be welcome to give me as many as he pleased. And what say the wicked? "We do not care about metaphorical fire." But they are *real*, sir—yes, as real as yourself. There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you have now a real body—a fire exactly like that which we have on earth in every thing except this, that it will not consume, though it will torture you. You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red hot, but when you take it out it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn forever without being consumed: it will lie, not as you consider, in metaphorical fire, but in actual flame. Did our Saviour mean fictions when he said he would cast body and soul into hell? What should there be a pit for if there were no bodies? why fire, why chains, if there were to be no bodies? Can fire touch the soul? can pits shut in spirits? can chains fetter souls? No; pits, and fire, and chains are for bodies, and bodies shall be there. Thou wilt sleep in the dust a little while. When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone—that will be a hell for it—but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin hells; body and soul shall be together, each brim-full of pain, thy soul sweating in its inmost pore drops of blood, and thy body, from head to foot, suffused with agony; conscience, judgment, memory, all tortured; but more, thy head tormented with racking pains, thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe thine ears tormented with

> "Sullen moans and hollow groans,
> And shrieks of tortured ghosts."

Thine heart beating high with fever; thy pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony; thy limbs cracking like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburnt; thyself, put in a vessel of hot oil, pained, yet coming out undestroyed; all thy veins becoming a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the devil shall ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's

Unutterable Lament; thy soul forever and ever aching, and thy body palpitating in unison with thy soul. Fictions, sir? Again, I say, they are no fictions, and as God liveth, but solid, stern truth. If God be true, and this Bible be true, what I have said is the truth, and you will find it one day to be so.

But now I must have a little reasoning with the ungodly on one or two points. First, I will reason with such of you as are very proud of your comely bodies, and array yourselves in goodly ornaments, and make yourselves glorious in your apparel. There are some of you who have no time for prayer but you have time enough for your toilet; you have no time for the prayer-meeting, but you have time enough to be brushing your hair to all eternity; you have no time to bend your knee, but plenty of time to make yourselves look smart and grand. Ah! fine lady, thou who takest care of thy goodly fashioned face, remember what was said by one of old when he held up the skull:

> "Tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick
> To this complexion she must come at last."

And something more than that: that fair face shall be scarred with the claws of fiends, and that fine body shall be only the medium for torment. Ah! dress thyself, proud gentleman, for the worm; anoint thyself for the crawling creatures of the grave; and, worse, come thou to hell with powdered hair—a gentleman in hell; come thou down to the pit in goodly apparel; my lord, come there, to find yourself no higher than others, except it be higher in torture, and plunged deeper in flames. Ay, it ill becomes us to waste so much time upon the trifling here, when there is so much to be done, and so little time for doing it in the saving of men's souls. O God, our God, deliver men from feasting and pampering their bodies when they are only fattening them for the slaughter, and feeding them to be devoured in the flame.

Again, hear me when I say to you who are gratifying your lusts—do you know that those bodies, the lusts of which you gratify here, will be in hell, and that you will have the same lusts in hell that you have here? The debauchee hastes to indulge his body in what he desires—can he do that in hell?

Can he find a place there where he shall gratify his lust and find indulgence for his foul desire? The drunkard here can pour down his throat the intoxicating and deadly draught; but where will he find the liquor to drink in hell, when his drunkenness will be as hot upon him as it is here! Ay, where will he find so much as a drop of water to cool his parched tongue? The man who loves gluttony here will be a glutton there; but where will be the food to satisfy him, when he may hold his finger up and see the loaves go away from him, and the fruits refuse his grasp. O! to have your passions and yet not to satisfy them! To shut a drunkard up in his cell, and give him nothing to drink! He would dash himself against the wall to get the liquor, but there is none for him. What wilt thou do in hell, O drunkard, with that thirst in thy throat, and having naught but flames to swallow, which increase thy woe? And what wilt thou do, O rake, when still thou wouldst be seducing others, but there are none with whom thou canst sin? Do I speak plainly? Did not Christ do so? If men will sin, they shall find men who are not ashamed to reprove them. Ah! to have a body in hell, with all its lusts, but not the power to satisfy them! How horrible that hell will be!

But hear me yet again. O! poor sinner, if I saw thee going into the inquisitor's den to be tormented, would I not beg of thee to stop ere thou shouldst put thy foot upon the threshold? And now I am talking to you of things that are real. If I were standing on a stage this morning, and were acting these things as fancies, I would make you weep: I would make the godly weep to think that so many should be damned, and I would make the ungodly weep to think that they should be damned. But when I speak of realities, they do not move you half as much as fictions would, and ye sit just as ye did ere the service had commenced. But hear me while I again affirm God's truth; I tell thee, sinner, that those eyes that now look on lust shall look on miseries that shall vex and torment thee. Those ears which now thou lendest to hear the song of blasphemy, shall hear moans and groans, and horrid sounds, such as only the damned know. That very throat down which thou dost drink shall be filled with fire. Those very lips and

arms of thine will be tortured all at once. Why, if thou hast a headache thou wilt run to thy physician; but what wilt thou do when thy head, and heart, and hands, and feet, ache all at once? If thou hast but a pain in thy reins, thou wilt search out medicines to heal thee; but what wilt thou do when gout, and rheum, and vertigo, and all else that is vile attack thy body at once? How wilt thou bear thyself when thou shalt be loathsome with every kind of disease, leprous, palsied, black, rotten, thy bones aching, thy marrow quivering, every limb thou hast, filled with pain: thy body a temple of demons, and a channel of miseries. And will ye march blindly on? As the ox goeth to the slaughter, and the sheep licketh the butchers' knife, so is it with many of you. Sirs, you are living without Christ, many of you; you are self-righteous and ungodly. One of you is going out this afternoon to take his day's pleasure; another is a fornicator in secret; another can cheat his neighbor; another can now and then curse God; another comes to this chapel, but in secret he is a drunkard; another prates about godliness, and God wots he is a damned hypocrite. What will ye do in that day when ye stand before your Maker? It is a little thing to have your minister upbraid you now; it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment; what will ye do when God shall thunder out, not your accusation, but your condemnation, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Ah! ye sensual ones, I knew I should never move you while I spoke about torments for your souls. Do I move you now? Ah! no. Many of you will go away and laugh, and call me, as I remember once being called before, "a hell-fire parson." Well, go; but you will see the hell-fire preacher one day in heaven, perhaps, and you yourselves will be cast out; and looking down thence, with reproving glance, it may be that I shall remind you that you heard the Word, and listened not to it. Ah! men, it is a light thing to hear it; it will be hard enough to bear it. You listen to me now unmoved; it will be harder work when death gets hold of you, and you lie roasting in the fire. Now you despise Christ; you won't despise him then. Now ye can waste your Sabbaths; then ye would give a thousand worlds for a Sabbath if ye could but have it

in heaven. Now ye can scoff and jeer; there will be no scoffing or jeering then: you will be shrieking, howling, wailing for mercy; but

> "There are no acts of pardon passed
> In the cold grave to which we haste;
> But darkness, death, and long despair,
> Reign in eternal silence there."

O, my hearers! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! Who among you can dwell with devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Can you, sir? can you? Can you abide the flame forever? "Oh, no," sayest thou, "What can I do to be saved?" Hear thou what Christ has to say: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou *shalt* be saved." "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned." "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool: though they be red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow"

SERMON XVIII.

THE CURSE REMOVED

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—GALATIANS, iii. 13.

THE law of God is a divine law, holy, heavenly, perfect. Those who find fault with the law, or in the least degree depreciate it, do not understand its design, and have no right idea of the law itself. Paul says, "The law is holy, but I am carnal; sold under sin." In all we ever say concerning justification by faith, we never intend to lower the opinion which our hearers have of the law, for the law is one of the most sublime of God's works. There is not a commandment too many; there is not one too few; but it is so *incomparable*, that its *perfection* is a proof of its divinity. No human lawgiver could have given forth such a law as that which we find in the decalogue. It is a perfect law; for all human laws that are right are to be found in that brief compendium and epitome of all that is good and excellent toward God, or between man and man. But while the law is glorious, it is never more misapplied than when it is used as a means of salvation. God never intended men *to be saved* by the law. When he proclaimed it on Sinai, it was with thunder, fire, and smoke; as if he would say, "O man, hear my law; but thou shalt tremble while thou hearest it." Hear it! It is a law which hath the blast of a terrible trumpet, even like the day of destruction, of which it is but the herald, if thou offendest it, and findest none to bear the doom for thee. It was written on stone; as if to teach us that it was a hard, cold, stony law—one which would have no mercy upon us, but which, if we

break it, would fall upon us, and dash us into a thousand pieces. O ye who trust in the law for your salvation! ye have erred from the faith; ye do not understand God's designs; ye are ignorant of every one of God's truths. The law was given by Moses to make men feel themselves condemned, but never to save them; its very intention was to "conclude us all in unbelief, and to condemn us all, that he might have mercy upon all." It was intended by its thunders to crush every hope of self-righteousness, by its lightnings to scathe and demolish every tower of our own works, that we might be brought humbly and simply to accept a finished salvation through the one mighty Mediator who has "finished the law, and made it honorable, and brought in an everlasting righteousness," whereby we stand, stand complete before our Maker at last, if we be in Christ. All that the law doth, you will observe, is to curse; it can not bless. In all the pages of revelation you will find no blessings that the law ever gave to one that offended it. There were blessings, and those were comparatively small, which might be gained by those who kept it thoroughly; but no blessing is ever written for one offender. Blessings we find in the gospel; curses we find in the law.

This afternoon we shall briefly consider, *first, the curse of the* law; *secondly, the curse removed;* thirdly, *the great Substitute who removed it*—"He was made a curse for us." And then we shall come, in the last place, *solemnly to ask each other, whether we are included in the mighty number for whom Christ did bear iniquities*, and for whom "He was made a curse."

I.—First, then, THE CURSE OF THE LAW. All who sin against the law are cursed by the law; all who rebel against its commands are cursed—cursed instantly, cursed terribly.

1. We shall regard that curse, first, as being *a universal curse*, resting upon every one of the seed of Adam. Perhaps some here will be inclined to say, "Of course the law of God will curse all those who are loose in their lives, or profane in their conversation. We can all of us imagine that the swearer is a cursed man, cursed by God We can suppose that the wrath of God rests upon the head of the man who is filthy in his life,

and whose conversation is not upright, or who is a degraded man, under the ban of society." But ah! my friend, it is not quite so easy to get at the real truth, which is this, that the curse of God rests upon every one of us, as by nature we stand before him. Thou mayest be the most moral in the world, but yet the curse of God is upon thee; thou mayest be lovely in thy life, modest in thy carriage, upright in thy behavior, almost Christlike in thy conduct, yet, if thou hast not been born again, and regenerated by sovereign grace, the curse of God still rests upon thine head. If thou hast but committed one sin in thy life, God's justice is so inexorable, that it condemns a man for one solitary offense; and though thy life should henceforth be one continued career of holiness, if thou hast sinned but once, unless thou hast an interest in the blood of Christ, the thunders of Sinai are launched at *thee*, and the lightnings of terrible vengeance flash on *thee*. Ah! my hearers, how humbling is this doctrine to our pride, that the curse of God is on every man of the seed of Adam; that every child born in this world is born under the curse, since it is born under the law; and that the moment I sin, though I transgress but once, I am from that moment condemned already; for "cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them"—cursed without a single hope of mercy, unless he find that mercy in the Substitute "who was made a curse for us." It is an awful thought, that the trail of the serpent is on the whole earth; that the poison is in the fountain of every heart; that the stream of the blood in all our veins is corrupt; that we are all condemned; that each one of us, without a single exception, whether he be philanthropist, senator, philosopher, divine, prince, or monarch, is under the curse, unless we have come to Christ, and have been absolved through him.

The curse, too, we must remark, while universal, *is just*. This is the great difficulty. There are many persons who think that the curse of God upon those who are undeniably wicked is, of course, right; but that the curse of God upon those who for the most part appear to be excellent, and who may have sinned but once, is an act of injustice. We answer, "Nay, when God pronounces the curse, he doth it justly; he

is a God of justice; 'just and right is he.'" And mark thee, man, if thou art condemned, it shall be by the strictest justice; and if thou hast sinned but once, the curse is righteous when it lights upon thy head. Dost thou ask me how this is? I answer, Thou sayest thy sin is little; then, if the sin be little, how little trouble it might have taken thee to have avoided it! If thy transgression be but small, at how small an expense thou mightest have refrained from it! Some have said, "Surely the sin of Adam was but little; he did but take an apple." Ay, but in its littleness was its greatness. If it was a little thing to take the fruit, with how little trouble might it have been avoided! And because it was so small an act, there was couched within it the greater malignity of guilt. So, too, thou mayest never have blasphemed thy God, thou mayest never have desecrated his Sabbath; yet, insomuch as thou hast committed a little sin, thou art justly condemned, for a little sin hath in it the essence of all sin; and I know not but that what we call little sins may be greater in God's sight than those which the world universally condemns, and against which the hiss of the execration of humanity continually rises. I say, God is just, although from his lips should rush thunders to blast the entire universe; God is just, although he curses all. Tremble, man, and "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish by the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." The curse is universal, the curse is just.

3. But let us notice, next, the curse *is fearful*. Some there be who think it little to be cursed of God; but O! if they knew the fearful consequences of that curse, they would think it terrible indeed. It were enough to make our knees knock together, to chill our blood, and start each individual hair of our head upon its end, if we did but know what it is to be under the curse of God. What does that curse include? It involves death, the death of this body: that is by no means an insignificant portion of its sentence. It includes spiritual death, a death of that inner life which Adam had—the life of the spirit, which hath now fled, and can only be restored by that holy Spirit who "quickeneth whom he will." And it includes, last of all, and worst of all, that death eternal, a dwelling forever in the place

"Where solemn groans, and hollow moans,
And shrieks of tortured ghosts,"

make up the only music. Death eternal includes all that can be gathered in that terrible, that awful—we had almost said unutterable—word "hell." This is a curse which rests on every man by nature. We make no exception of rank or degree; for God has made none. We offer no hope of exception of character or reputation; for God has made none. The whole of us are shut up to this, that (so far as the law is concerned) we must die—die here and die in the next world, and die a death which never dies; feel a worm which shall gnaw forever, and a fire which never can be extinguished, even by a flood of tears of future penitence. There we must be forever, O! forever lost. Could we estimate that curse, I say again, the torments that tyrants could inflict we might well afford to ridicule, the injuries that this body can sustain we might well afford to despise, compared with that awful avalanch of threatening which rushes down with fearful force from the mountain of God's truth. Condemnation—that curse of God—abideth on us all.

4. We hasten from this point, beloved, for it is fearful work to speak upon it; but yet we must not depart from it entirely, till we have hinted at one thought more; and that is, that the curse of God which comes upon sinful men is *a present* curse. O! my dear hearers, could I lay hold of your hands, if ye be not converted, I would labor with tears and groans to get you to grasp this thought. It is not so much a condemnation in the future that you have to dread as a damnation *now*. Yes, sitting where thou art, my hearer, if thou art out of Christ, thou art condemned now; thy condemnation is sealed; thy death-warrant has been stamped by the great seal of the Majesty of heaven; the angel's sword of vengeance is already unsheathed, and over thy head this afternoon. Whosoever thou mayest be, if thou art out of Christ, there hangeth a sword over thee, a sword suspended by a hair, which death shall cut: and then that sword shall descend, dividing thy soul from thy body, and sending both of them to pains eternal. O! ye might start up from your seats with fear, if ye did but know this, some of you. Ye are reputable, ye are respectable, ye

are honorable, perhaps right honorable, and yet condemned men, condemned women. On the walls of heaven ye are proscribed, written up there as deicides, who have slain the Saviour —as rebels against God's government, who have committed high treason against him; and perhaps even now the dark-winged angel of death is spreading his pinions upon the blast, hastening to hurry you down to destruction. Say not, O sinner, that I would affright thee; say, rather, that I would bring thee to the Saviour; for whether thou hearest this or not, or believest it or not, thou canst not alter the truth thereof—that thou art now, if thou hast not given thyself to Christ, "condemned already;" and wherever thou sittest, thou art but still in thy condemned cell; for this whole earth is but one huge prison-house, wherein the condemned one doth drag along a chain of condemnation, till death takes him to the scaffold, where the fearful execution of terrific woe must take place upon him. Now condemned and forever condemned: hear that word. "The curse of the law!"

II. But now I must speak, in the second place, of THE REMOVAL OF THAT CURSE. This is a sweet and pleasant duty. Some of you, my dear friends, will be able to follow me in your experience, while I just remind you how it was, that in your salvation Christ removed the curse.

1. First, you will agree with me when I say, that the removal of the curse from us is done in a moment. It is *an instantaneous thing*. I may stand here one moment under the curse; and if the Spirit look upon me, and I breathe a prayer to heaven—if by faith I cast myself on Jesus—in one solitary second, ere the clock hath ticked, my sins may be all forgiven. Hart sung truly, when he said—

> "The moment a sinner believes,
> And trusts in his crucified God,
> His pardon at once he receives,
> Salvation in full, through his blood"

You will remember in Christ's life, that most of the cures he wrought—yea, I believe all—were instantaneous cures. See! there lies a man stretched on his couch, from which he hath

not risen for years. "Take up thy bed, and walk," said Christ in majesty. The man takes up that bed, and without the intervention of weeks of convalescence at once carries it, leaping like a hart. There is another. From his closed lips a sound hath scarcely ever escaped; he is dumb; Christ toucheth his lips; "Ephphatha, be opened;" and he sings at once. He does not barely speak, but he speaks plain; the tongue of the dumb sings. Ay, and even in the cases where Christ healed death itself, he did it instantaneously. When that beautiful creature lay asleep in death upon the bed, Jesus went to her; and though her dark ringlets covered up her eyes, which were now glazed in death, Jesus did but take her clay-cold hand in his, and say, "Talitha cumi! damsel, I say unto thee, Arise;" and no sooner had he said it, than she sat up, and opened her eyes; and to show that she was not merely half alive, or half restored, she rose up, and ministered to him. We do not say that the great work of conversion is instantaneous; that may take some time; for Christ commences in the heart a work, which is to be carried on through life in sanctification; but *the justification*, the taking away the curse, is done in a single moment. "Unwrite the curse," says God. It is done. The acquittal is signed and sealed; it taketh not long.

> "Fully discharged by Christ I am,
> From sin's tremendous curse and blame."

I may stand here at this moment, and I may have believed in Christ but five minutes ago; still, if I have believed in Christ but that short space of time, I am as justified, in God's sight, as I would be should I live until these hairs are whitened by the sunlight of heaven, or as I shall be when I walk among the golden lamps of the city of palaces. God justifieth his people at once; the curse is removed in a single moment. Sinner, hear that! Thou mayest now be under condemnation; but ere thou canst say "now" again, thou mayest be able to say—"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus." We may be fully absolved in a moment.

2. Mark, beloved, in the next place, that this removal of the curse from us, when it does take place, is *an entire re*

noval. It is not a part of the curse which is taken away Christ doth not stand at the foot of Sinai, and say, "Thunders! diminish your force;" he doth not catch here and there a lightning, and bind its wings; nay, but when he cometh he bloweth away all the smoke, he putteth aside all the thunder, he quencheth all the lightning; he removeth it all. When Christ pardoneth, he pardoneth *all* sin; the sins of twice ten thousand years he pardons in an hour. Thou mayest be old and gray-headed, and hitherto unpardoned; but though thy sins exceed in number the stars spread in the sky, one moment takes them all away. Mark that "*all!*" That sin of midnight; that black sin which, like a ghost, has haunted thee all thy life; that hideous crime; that unknown act of blackness which hath darkened thy character; that awful stain upon thy conscience—they shall be all taken away. And though thou hast a stain upon that hand—a stain which thou hast often sought to wash out by all the mixtures that Moses can give thee—thou shalt find, when thou art bathed in Jesus' blood, that thou shalt be able to say, "All clean, my Lord, all clean; not a spot now; all is gone; I am completely washed from head to foot; the stains are all removed." It is the glory of this removal of the curse that it is all taken away; there is not a single atom left. Hushed now is the law's loud thunder; the sentence is entirely reversed, and there is no fear left.

3. We must say again upon this point, that when Christ removes the curse, it is *an irreversible removal.* Once let me be acquitted, who is he that condemns me? There be some in these modern times who teach that God justifieth, and yet, after that, condemns the same person whom he has justified. We have heard it asserted pretty boldly, that a man may be a child of God to-day—hear it, ye heavens, and be astonished and be a child of the devil to-morrow; we have heard it said, but we know it is untrue, for we find nothing in Scripture to warrant it. We have often asked ourselves, Can men really believe that, after having been "begotten again to a lively hope," that birth in God, through Christ, and by his Spirit, can yet fail? We have asked ourselves, Can men imagine that, after God hath once broken our chains, and set us free,

he will call us back, and bind us once again, like Prometheus, to the great rocks of despair? Will he once blot out the handwriting that is against us, and then record the charge again? Once pardoned, then condemned? We trow, that had Paul been in the way of such men, he would have said, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" There is no condemnation to us, being in Christ Jesus; we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is a sweet thought, that Satan himself can never rob me of my pardon. I may lose my copy of it, and lose my comfort; but the original pardon is filed in heaven. It may be that gloomy doubts may arise, and I may fear to think myself forgiven: but

"Did Jesus upon me shine?
Then Jesus is for ever mine.

"O! my distrustful heart!
How small thy faith appears?
Far greater, Lord, thou art,
Than all my doubts and fears.
'Midst all my sin, and fear, and woe,
Thy Spirit will not let me go."

I love, at times, to go back to the hour when I hope I was forgiven through a Saviour's blood. There is much comfort in it to remember that blessed hour when first we knew the Lord.

"Dost mind the place, the spot of ground,
Where Jesus did thee meet?"

Perhaps thou dost; perhaps thou canst look back to the very place where Jesus whispered thou wast his. Canst thou do so? O! how much comfort it will give thee! for, remember, once acquitted, acquitted forever. So saith God's word. Once pardoned, thou art clear; once set at liberty, thou shalt never be a slave again; once hath Sinai been appeased, it shall never roar twice. Blessed be God's name! we are brought to Calvary, and we shall be brought to Zion too At last shall we stand before God; and even there we shall be able to say—

"Great God! I am clean;
Through Jesus' blood I 'm clean."

III. And now we are brought, in the third place, to observe THE GREAT SUBSTITUTE by whom the curse is removed. The curse of God is not easily taken away; in fact, there was but one method whereby it could be removed. The lightnings were in God's hand; they must be launched; he said they must. The sword was unsheathed; it must be satisfied; God vowed it must. Vengeance was ready; vengeance must fall; God had said it must. How, then, was the sinner to be saved? The only answer was this. The Son of God appears; and he says, "Father! launch thy thunderbolts at me; here is my breast—plunge that sword in here; here are my shoulders—let the lash of vengeance fall on them;" and Christ, the Substitute, came forth and stood for us, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." It is our delight to preach the doctrine of substitution, because we are fully persuaded that no gospel is preached where substitution is omitted. Unless men are told positively and plainly that Christ did stand in their room and stead, to bear their guilt and carry their sorrows, they never can see how God is to be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." We have heard some preach a gospel, something after this order—that though God is angry with men, yet out of his great mercy, for the sake of something that Christ has done, he does not punish them, but remits the penalty. Now, we hold, that this is not of God's gospel; for it is neither just to God, nor safe to man. We believe that God never remitted the penalty, that he did not forgive the sin without punishing it, but that there was blood for blood, and stroke for stroke, and death for death, and punishment for punishment, without the abatement of a solitary jot or tittle; that Jesus Christ, the Saviour, did drink the veritable cup of our redemption to its very dregs; that he did suffer beneath the awful crushing wheels of divine vengeance, the self-same pains and sufferings which we ought to have endured. O! the glorious doctrine of substitution! When it is preached fully and rightly, what a charm and what a power it hath. O! how sweet to tell sinners, that though God hath said, "Thou must die," their Maker stoops his head to die for

them, and Christ incarnate breathes his last upon a tree, that God might execute his vengeance, and yet might pardon the ungodly.

Should there be one here who does not understand substitution, let me repeat what I have said. Sinner, the only way thou canst be saved is this. God *must* punish sin; if he did not, he would undeify himself; but if he has punished sin in the person of Christ for thee, thou art fully absolved, thou art quite clear; Christ hath suffered what thou oughtest to have suffered, and thou mayest rejoice in that. "Well," sayest thou, "I ought to have died." *Christ hath died!* "I ought to have been sent to hell." Christ did not go there to endure that torment forever; but *he suffered an equivalent for it*, something which satisfied God. The whole of hell was distilled into his cup of sorrows; he drank it. The cup which his father gave him, he drank to its dregs.

> "At one tremendous draught of love,
> He drank destruction dry."

All the punishment, all the curse, on him was laid. Vengeance now was satisfied; all was gone, and gone for ever; but not gone without having been taken away by the Saviour The thunders have not been reserved, they have been launched at him, and vengeance is satisfied, because Christ has endured the penalty.

IV. Now we come to answer that last question: *How many among us can say, that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us?"* The first part of our discourse has been entirely doctrinal: some of you have not cared for it, because you did not feel you were interested in it. It was natural it should be so. At the reading of a will, doth the servant stay to listen? Nay, there is nothing for her; but if a man be a son, how doth he open his ear to catch the sound, to know if there be an estate for him; and however ill the lawyer may read that will, how anxious he is to catch every word, and know if there is a portion for him among the children! Now, beloved, let us read the will again, to see if you belong to those for whom Christ

made a satisfaction. The usual way with most of our congregations is this—they write themselves down for Christ's long before God has done it. You make a profession of religion, you wear a Christian's cloak, you behave like a Christian, you take a seat in a Christian church or chapel, and you think you are christianized at once; whereas one half of our congregations who fancy themselves to be Christians nave made a great mistake; never were they more apart from any character than from being true Christians. Let me beg you not to suppose yourselves to be believers, because your parents were so, or because you belong to an orthodox church. Religion is a thing which we must have for ourselves; and it is a question which we all ought to ask, whether we are all interested in the atonement of Christ, and have a portion in the merits of his agonies? Come, then, I will put a question to thee. First, let me ask thee this, my friend: *Wast thou ever condemned by the law in thine own conscience?* "Nay," sayest thou, "I know not what thou meanest." Of course thou dost not; and thou hast no hope, then, that thou art safe. But I will ask thee yet again: Hast thou been condemned by the law in thy conscience? Hast thou ever heard the word of God saying in thy own soul, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them?" And hast thou *felt* that thou wast cursed? Didst thou ever stand before God's bar, like a poor condemned criminal before the judge, ready for execution? Hast thou, as John Bunyan would have had it, ever had the rope upon thy neck? Hast thou ever seen the black cap put upon the face of thy Judge? Hast thou ever thought thyself about to be turned off from the gallows? Hast thou ever walked the earth, as if at every step the earth would open beneath thee, and swallow thee up? Hast thou ever felt thyself to be a worthless, ruined, sin-condemned, law-condemned, conscience-condemned sinner? Hast thou ever fallen down before God, and said: "Lord, thou art just; though thou slay me, I will say, Thou art just; for I am sinful, and I deserve thy wrath?" As the Lord liveth, if thou hast never felt that, thou art a stranger to his grace; for the man who acquits himself God condemneth; and if the law condemn

thee, God will acquit thee. So long as thou hast felt thyself condemned, thou mayest know that Christ died for condemned ones, and shed his blood for sinners; but and if thou foldest thine arms in self-security, if thou sayest: "I am good, I am righteous, I am honorable," be thou warned of this—thine armor is the weaving of a spider; it shall be broken in pieces; the garments of thy righteousness are light as the web of the gossamer, and shall be blown away by the breath of the Eternal, in that day when he will unspin all that nature hath ever woven. Ay, I bid thee now take heed; if thou hast never been condemned by the law, thou hast never been acquitted by grace.

And now another question I will ask thee: *Hast thou ever felt thyself to be acquitted by Christ?* "No," saith one, "I never expected to feel that; I thought that we might know it perhaps when we came to die—that a few eminent Christians might then possibly know themselves to be forgiven; but I think, sir, you are very enthusiastic to ask *me* whether *I* have ever *felt* myself to be forgiven." My dear friend, you mistake. Do you think, if a man had been a galley-slave, chained to an oar for many a year, if he were once set free he would not know whether he were free or not? Do you think that a slave who had been toiling for years, when once he trod upon the land of freedom, if you should say to him: "Do you know that you are emancipated?" Do you think he would not know it? Or a man that has been dead in his grave, if he were awakened to life, do you think he would not know it? There may be times when he hath forgotten the season; but he will know himself to be alive; he will feel and know himself to be free. Tell me it is enthusiastic to ask you whether you have ever felt your chains broken? Sirs, if you have never felt your chains fall off from you, then be it known that your chains are on you; for when God breaketh our chains from off us, we know ourselves to be free. The most of us, when God did set us free from our prison-house, did leap for very joy; and we remember the mountains and the hills did burst forth before us into singing, and the trees of the field did clap their hands. We shall never forget that gladsome moment; it is impressed upon our memory; we shall remem-

ber it till life's latest hour. I ask thee, again, Didst thou ever feel thyself forgiven? And if thou sayest "No," then thou hast no right to think thou art. If Jesus hath never whispered in thine ear, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions," thou hast no right to think thyself pardoned. O! I beseech thee, examine thyself, and know whether thou hast been condemned by the law, and whether thou hast been acquitted by Christ!

And, lastly, my dear friends, I may have, and doubtless have, many present here who have simply come to spend an hour, but who have no care, no interest, no concern about their own souls—who are, perhaps, utterly and entirely careless as to whether they are condemned or not. O! if I could speak to you as I would wish, I would speak

> "As though I ne'er might speak again,
> A dying man to dying men."

When I remember that I shall likely enough never see the faces of many of you again, I feel that there is a deep and an awful responsibility lying on me to speak to such of you as are careless. There are some of you who are putting off the evil day; and you are saying, "If I be condemned, I care not for it." Ah! my friend, if I saw thee carelessly asleep on thy bed, when the flames were raging in thy chamber, I would shout in thine ear, or I would drag thee from thy couch of slumber. If I knew that while thou hadst a bad disease within thee, thou wouldst not take the medicine, and that if thou didst not take it thou wouldst die, I would implore thee on my knees to take that medicine that would save thee. But, alas! here you are: you are in danger of destruction, many of you, and you have a disease within you that must soon destroy your lives; and yet what careless, hardened, thoughtless creatures you are, just caring for the body, and not seeking for Christ! As the angel put his hand upon Lot, and said, "Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, but flee to the mountain," so would I do to you. I would come to each of you, and say, "My brother, carelessness may avail thee now; but carelessness will not stop the voice of *death* when *he* speaks. Indifference may silence *my* voice in your conscience;

but when that gloomy skeleton tyrant comes to address thee, indifference will not do then. Now thou mayest laugh; now thou mayest dance; now thou mayest be merry; now thy cup may be full to the brim; but what wilt thou do in that day, when the heavens are clothed with glory, when the books are opened, when the great white throne is set, and when thou comest to be condemned or acquitted before thy Maker? Do, I beseech thee, do forestall the day. I beg of thee, for Christ's sake, bethink thyself even now before thy Judge; conceive him there in yonder heavens upon his throne; imagine that now thou art looking upon him. Oh! my hearer, what wilt thou do? Thou art before the judgment-throne, without Christ; thou art there naked. 'Rocks! hide me! hide me! hide me! I am naked!' But thou art dragged out, sinner! What wilt thou do now? Thou art dragged naked before thy Judge. I see thee bend thy knee; I hear thee cry, 'O Jesus, clothe me now!' 'Nay,' saith Jesus, 'the robe now is hung up forever, not to be worn by thee.' 'Saviour! spread thy wings over me!' 'Nay,' saith he, 'I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.'" Do I talk realities, or mere fictions? Why, realities; and yet if I were reading a novel to you, you would be lost in tears; but when I tell you God's truth, that soon his chariot shall descend to earth, and he shall judge us all, you sit unmoved and careless of that event. But oh! be it known to every careless sinner, death and judgment are not the things they fancy; everlasting wrath and eternal severance from God are not such light things to endure as they have conceived. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall abide with everlasting torments?"

But to close: have I one here who is saying, "What must I do to be saved, for I feel myself condemned?" Hear thou Christ's own words—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Dost thou ask me what it is to believe? Hear, then, the answer. To believe is to look to Jesus. That little word "look" expresses beautifully what a sinner is to do. There is little in its ap-

pearance, but there is much in its meaning. Believing is letting the hands lie still, and turning the eyes to Christ. We can not be saved by our hands; but we are saved through our eyes, when they look to Jesus. Sinner! it is no use for thee to try and save thyself; but to believe in Christ is the only way of salvation; and that is, throwing self behind your back, and putting Christ right before thee. I never can find a better figure than the negro's one: to believe is to fall flat down upon the promise, and there to lie. To believe is as a man would do in a stream. It is said, that if we were to fold our arms, and lie motionless, we could not sink. To believe is to float upon the stream of grace. I grant you, you shall *do* afterward; but you must *live* before you can do. The gospel is the reverse of the law. The law says, "Do and live;" the gospel says, "Live first, then do." The way to do, poor sinner, is to say, "Here, Jesus, here I am; I give myself to thee." I never had a better idea of believing than I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before; but it struck me very forcibly at the time, and I can not help repeating it. Speaking about faith he said, "The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately; but I told him that he must not say any thing to me about my sins, he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to him, bad debts and all." That is believing. Believing is giving up all we have to Christ, and taking all Christ has to ourselves. It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for his righteousness, changing our sins for his merits. Execute the transfer, sinner; rather, may God's grace execute it, and give thee faith in it; and then the law will be no longer thy condemnation, but it shall acquit thee. May Christ add his blessing! May the Holy Spirit rest upon us! And may we meet at last in heaven! Then will we "sing to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

SERMON XIX.

THE COMER'S CONFLICT WITH SATAN.

"And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father."—LUKE, ix. 42.

THIS child possessed with an evil spirit, is a most fitting emblem of every ungodly and unconverted man. Though we be not possessed with devils, yet by nature we are possessed with devilish vices and lusts, which, if they do not distress and vex our bodies, will most certainly destroy our souls. Never creature possessed with evil spirit was in a worse plight than the man who is without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world. The casting out of the unclean spirit was moreover a thing that was impossible to man and only possible to God; and so is the conversion of an ungodly sinner a thing beyond the reach of human ability, and only to be accomplished by the might of the Most High. The dreadful bellowings, foamings, and tearings caused in this unhappy child by the unclean spirit, are a picture of the sins, iniquities, and vices into which ungodly men are continually and impetuously hurried; and a type of that sad and terrible suffering which remorse will by-and-by bring to their conscience, and which the vengeance of God will soon cause to occupy their hearts. The bringing of this child to the Saviour by his parents teaches us a lesson, that those of us to whom the care of youth is intrusted, either as parents or teachers, should be anxious to bring our children to Jesus Christ, that he may graciously save them. The devout desire and compassion of the father for his child is but a pattern of what every parent ought to feel for his offspring. Like Abraham, he should pray

"O, that Ishmael might live before thee;" and not only put up the prayer, but also strive in the use of the means to bring his child to the pool of Siloam that haply the angel may stir the stream, and his son may step into the water and be made whole. The parent should place his offspring where the Saviour walks, that he may look upon him, and heal him. The coming of the child to Christ is a picture of saving faith, for faith is coming to Christ, simply believing in the power of his atonement. And lastly, the casting down and tearing which is mentioned in my text is a picture of the comer's conflict with the enemy of souls. "As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him." Our subject this morning will be the well-known fact, that coming sinners, when they approach the Saviour, are often thrown down by Satan and torn, so that they suffer exceedingly in their minds, and are well-nigh ready to give up in despair.

There are four points for our consideration this morning. That you may easily remember them I have made them alliterative: the devil's *doings*, *designs*, *discovery*, *and defeat*.

I. First, THE DEVIL'S DOINGS. When this child came to Christ to be healed, the devil threw him down and tare him. Now, this is an illustration of what Satan does with most, if not all sinners when they come to Jesus to seek light and life through him; he throws them down and tears them. Allow me to point out how it is that the devil causes those extraordinary pangs and agonies which attend conversion. He has a multitude of devices, for he is cunning and crafty, and he has divers ways of accomplishing that end.

1. First of all he does this by *perverting the truth of God* for the destruction of the soul's hope and comfort. The devil is very sound in divinity. I never suspected him of heterodoxy yet. I believe him to be one of the most orthodox individuals in creation. Other people may disbelieve the doctrines of revelation, but the devil can not, for he knows the truth, and though he will belie it often, he is so crafty that he understands that with the soul convinced of sin his best method is not to contradict the truth, but to pervert it. Now I will mention the five great doctrines which we hold to be most prominent in Scripture, by the perversion of each of which

the devil tries to keep the soul in bondage, darkness, and despair.

First, there is the great doctrine of *election*—that God hath chosen to himself a number that no man can number, who shall be holy, since they are ordained to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now the devil agitates the coming soul upon that doctrine. "O," saith he, "perhaps you are not elect. It is of no use your coming, and struggling, and striving; you may sit still and do nothing, and yet be saved, if you are to be saved; but if your name is written among the lost, all your praying, seeking, and believing, can not save you." Thus the devil begins preaching sovereignty in the sinner's ear, to make him believe that the Lord will assuredly cut him off. He asks, "How can you suppose that such a wretch as you can be elected? You deserve to be damned, and you know it. Your brother is a good moral man, but as for you, you are the chief of sinners; do you think God would choose you?" Then if the tempted one is instructed that election is not according to merit, but of God's free will, Satan opens another battery, and insinuates, "You would not feel like this if you were one of God's elect; you would not be allowed to come into all this suffering, and pray so long in vain." And again he whispers, "You are not one of his;" and thus attempts to throw the soul down and tear it in pieces. I would just like to have a blow at his schemes this morning by reminding our friends that when they come to Christ they never need puzzle themselves about the doctrine of election. No one, in teaching a child the alphabet, makes him learn Z before he has learned A; so a sinner must not expect to learn election until he knows faith. The text with which he has to do is this: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus shall be saved;" and when the Lord has enabled him to learn and believe that, he may go on to this: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." But if he can not shake off the subject from his mind, he need not do it, for he may remember that every penitent is elect, every believer is elect. However great the sinner, if he does but repent, that is a proof that he is elect; if he does

but believe on Christ, he is as certainly elected as his faith is genuine. I can not tell that I am elected before I know whether I believe in God. I can not tell a thing unless I see its effects. I can not tell whether there is a seed in the ground unless you enable me to stir up the soil, or to wait till I see the blade shooting from under the earth; so I can not tell whether your name is written in the Lamb's book of life until I see God's love manifested in you in the stretching out of your hearts toward God. I can not disembowel the deep rocks of obscurity to find out that hidden thing, unless evidences and effects furnish me with spade and mattock. There is a newspaper in Glasgow called the *Christian News*, alias, the *Un-Christian News*, or *Christian Wasp*, and the editor says of me, that I am not fit to preach God's word because I do not know (can you guess what it is?) who God's elect are. He writes words to this effect—"According to his own confession, the young man does not know who God's elect are until he has asked them questions, and knows their character." Well, if I did, I should be marvelously wise indeed. Who does know them apart from those signs, and marks, and evidences, in the heart and life which God always vouchsafes to his elect in due time? Shall I unlock the archives of heaven and read the rolls, or, with presumptuous hand unfold the Lamb's book of life, to know who are God's elect? No; I leave that for the editor of the *Christian News* to do, and when he publishes a full and correct list of the elect, no doubt it will be bought up tremendously, and the printer will speedily make a fortune by it. Let not the soul be distressed about election, for all who repent and believe do so, as the effect of their election.

The next doctrine is that of *our depravity;* that all men are fallen in Adam; that they are all gone aside from the truth, and that moreover by their practice they have become full of sin; that in them dwelleth no good thing, and that if any good thing shall ever come there, it shall be put there by God; for there is not even the seed of goodness in the heart, much less the flower of it. The devil torments the soul with that doctrine, and he says, "See what a depraved creature you are; you know how dreadfully you have sinned against God; you

have gone astray ten thousand times. See," he says, "there are your old sins still crying after you;" and he waves his wand, and gives a resurrection to past iniquities, which rise up like ghosts and terrify the soul. "There, look at that midnight scene; remember that deed of ingratitude; hark! do you not hear that oath echoed back from the walls of the past? Look at your heart; can that ever be washed? Why, it is full of blackness. You know how you tried to pray yesterday, and your mind roved to your business before you were half through your prayer; and since you have been seeking God you have only been half in earnest, knocking at the door sometimes, and then afterward giving it up. It is impossible you should ever be forgiven; you have gone too far astray for the shepherd to find you; you are altogether become iniquity; your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and you can not be saved." Many a poor soul has had a most terrible tearing with that doctrine. I have felt something of it myself, when I have verily thought that I must be rent in pieces by the dread remembrance of what I had been. The devil throws the sinner down and pulls him almost limb from limb, by persuading him that his guilt is heinous beyond parallel; that his iniquities are far beyond the reach of mercy, and his death-warrant is signed. Ah! poor soul, get up again; the devil has no right to throw you down. Your sin can not be too great for God's mercy. It is not the greatness of sin that can cause any man to be damned, if there be not a want of faith. If a man has faith, notwithstanding all the sins he ever may have committed, he shall be saved; but if he have but one sin without faith, that one sin shall utterly destroy him. Faith in the blood of Christ destroys the sting of sin. One drop of the Saviour's precious blood could extinguish a thousand flaming worlds if God should will it, much more put out the burning fears of your poor heart. If thou believest in Christ, thou shalt say to the mountain of thy guilt, "Be thou removed far hence, and cast into the depths of the sea."

Then, there is the doctrine of *effectual calling*, that God calls his children effectually; that it is not the power of man which brings us to God, but that it is the work of God to bring man to grace; that he calls those whom he would save

with an effectual and special call which he vouchsafes only to his children. "There, now," says the evil one, "the minister said there must be an effectual call; depend upon it yours is not such a call; it never came from God; it is only a few heated feelings; you were excited a little under the sermon, and it will all be gone directly, like the morning cloud or the early dew. You have strong desires sometimes, but at other seasons they are not half so vehement; if the Lord drew you, you would be always drawn with the same power; it will be over soon, and you will be all the worse for having been inclined to go to God under these legal convictions, and then, afterward, running away from him." Well, beloved, tell Satan that you don't know whether it is an effectual call, but you know this, that if you perish you will go to Christ and perish only there; tell him you know it is so effectual that you can not help going to Christ; that whether it is to last or not you can not say, *that* you will let him know by-and-by; but that you are resolved—for this is your last defense—if you perish, to perish at the cross of Christ; and so by the help of God you may by such means overcome him when he throws you down on that doctrine.

The devil will also pervert the doctrine of *final perseverance*. "Look," says Satan, "the children of God always hold on their way: they never leave off being holy; they persevere; their faith is like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day; and so would yours be if you were one of the Lord's. But you will never be able to persevere. Don't you remember, six months ago, when you were lying on a sick-bed, you resolved to serve God, and it all broke down? You have vowed many times that you would be a Christian, and it has not lasted a fortnight. It will never do; you are too fickle; you will never keep fast hold on Christ; you will go with him a little while, but you will be sure to turn back; therefore, you can not be one of the Lord's, for they never do turn back." So he tries to pull and tear the poor soul on that great and comforting doctrine. The same nail on which a sinner must hang his hope the devil tries to drive into the very temples of his faith, that he may die like Sisera in the tent of Jael. O, poor soul, tell Satan that thy perseverance is not

thine, but that God is the author of it; that however weak thou art, thou knowest thy weakness, but that if God begins a good work he will never leave it unfinished. And repelling him thus, thou mayest rise up from that throwing down and tearing which he has given to thee.

Then there is the doctrine of *redemption;* with which the unclean spirit will assault the soul. "O," says Satan, "it is true Christ died, but not for you; you are a peculiar character." I remember the devil once made me believe that I was one alone, without a companion. I thought there was no one like myself. I saw that others had sinned as I had done, and had gone as far as I had, but I fancied that there was something peculiar about my sin. Thus the devil tried to set me apart as if I did not belong to the rest of mankind; I thought that if I had been any body else I might have been saved. How often I wished I had been a poor swearing drunken man in the streets, and then I thought I might have a better chance; but as it was, I thought I was to die alone, like the deer in the shade of the forest. But well do I remember my friends singing that sweet hymn,

> "His grace is sovereign, rich, and free,
> And why, my soul, why not for thee?"

One of the hymns in Denham's selection, and it ought to have been in Rippon's, as well as I can remember, ends thus:

> "He shed his blood so rich and free,
> And why, my soul, why not for thee?"

That is just the question we never put to ourselves. We say, "Sure, my soul, why not for any body else but for thee?" Up, poor soul! If Satan is trying to tear thee, tell him it is written, "He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him;" that "whosoever cometh he will in no wise cast out;" and it may be that thus God will deliver thee from that desperate conflict into which, as a coming sinner, thou hast been cast.

2. But Satan is not very scrupulous, and he sometimes throws the coming sinner down and tears him by *telling horrible falsehoods.* Some of you may not have known this, and

I thank God if you do not understand some of the things of which I am about to speak. Many a time when the soul is coming to Christ, Satan violently injects infidel thoughts. I have never been thoroughly an unbeliever but once, and that was not before I knew the need of a Saviour, but after it. It was just when I wanted Christ and panted after him, that on a sudden the thought crossed my mind, which I abhorred but could not conquer, that there was no God, no Christ, no heaven, no hell; that all my prayers were but a farce, and that I might as well have whistled to the winds or spoken to the howling waves. Ah! I remember how my ship drifted along through that sea of fire, loosened from the anchor of my faith which I had received from my fathers. I doubted every thing, until at last the devil defeated himself by making me doubt my own existence, and I thought I was an idea floating in the nothingness of vacuity; then startled with that thought, and feeling that I was substantial flesh and blood after all, I saw that God was, and Christ was, and heaven was, and hell was, and that all these things were very truths. I should not be astonished if many here had been on the very verge of infidelity, and have doubted almost every thing. It is when Satan finds the heart tender that he tries to stamp his own impress of infidelity upon the soul; but, blessed be God, he never accomplishes it in the truly-coming sinner. He labors also to inject blasphemous thoughts, and then tells us they are ours. Has he not sometimes poured in most vehement torrents of blasphemy and evil imaginations into our hearts, which we ignorantly thought must be our own? Yet not one of them perhaps belonged to us. I remember I had once been alone musing on God, when on a sudden it seemed as if the floodgates of hell had been loosened; my head became a very pandemonium; ten thousand evil spirits seemed to be holding carnival within my brain; and I held my mouth, lest I should give utterance to the words of blasphemy that were poured into my ears. Things I had never heard or thought of before came rushing impetuously into my mind, and I could scarce withstand their influence. It was the devil throwing me down and tearing me. Ah! poor soul, thou wilt have that perhaps; but remember it is only one of the tricks

of the arch enemy. He drives his unclean beasts into your field and then calls them yours. Now, in old time, when tramps and vagrants troubled a parish, they whipped them and then sent them on to the next parish. So when you get these evil thoughts, give them a sound whipping and send them away; they do not belong to you if you do not indulge them. But if you fear that these thoughts are your own, you may ay, "I will go to Christ, and even if these blasphemies are mine, I will confess them to the great High Priest, for I know that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

3. Then if the devil can not overcome you there, he tries another method; he takes all the threatening passages out of God's Word, and says, they all apply to you. He reads you this passage, "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye should pray for it." "There," says the devil, "the apostle did not say he could even pray for the man who had committed certain sins." Then he reads that "sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven." "There," he says "is your character; you have committed sin against the Holy Ghost, and you will never be pardoned." Then he brings another passage: "Let him alone; Ephraim is given unto idols." "There," says Satan, "you have had no liberty in prayer lately; God has let you alone; you are given unto idols; you are entirely destroyed;" and the cruel fiend howls his song of joy, and makes a merry dance over the thought that the poor soul is to be lost. But do not believe him, my dear friends. No man has committed the sin against the Holy Ghost as long as he has grace to repent; it is certain that no man can have committed that sin if he flies to Christ and believes on him. No believing soul can commit it; no penitent sinner ever has committed it. If a man be careless and thoughtless—if he can hear a terrible sermon and laugh it off, and put away his convictions —if he never feels any strivings of conscience, there is a fear that he may have committed that sin. But as long as you have any desires to Christ, you have no more committed that sin than you have flown up to the stars and swept cobwebs from the skies. As long as you have any sense of your guilt, any desire to be redeemed, you can not have fallen into that

sin; as a penitent you may still be saved, but if you had committed it, you could not be penitent.

II. Let me dwell for a moment or two upon the second point—the DEVIL'S DESIGN. Why does he throw the coming soul down and tear it?

First, because *he does not like to lose it* "No king will willingly lose his subjects," said Diabolus to Christian, when he stretched himself across the road, "and I swear thou shalt go no further; here I spill thy soul." There he stood vowing vengeance at him because he had escaped from his dominion. Do you suppose that Satan would lose his subjects one by one and not be wroth? Assuredly not. As soon as he sees a soul hurrying off to the wicket gate, with his eyes fixed on the light, away go all hell's dogs after him. "There is another of my subjects going; my empire is being thinned; my family is being diminished;" and he tries with might and main to bring the poor soul back again. Ah! soul, don't be deceived by him; his design is to throw you down; he does not tell thee these things to do thee good, or to humble thee, but in order to keep thee from coming to Christ, and decoy thee into his net where he may utterly destroy thee.

Sometimes, I belive, he has the vile design of *inducing poor souls to make away with themselves* before they have faith in Christ. This is an extreme case, but I have met with not a few who have been thus tempted to take away their lives, and rush before their Maker with their hands red with their own blood; for Satan knows full well that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. But he never accomplished his design in the soul of one elect sinner yet.

Then Satan has another motive. *When the soul is coming to Christ he tries, out of spite, to worry that soul.* Satan's heart is made up of that which is just the opposite of benevolence—malevolence; he hates every thing, and loves nothing; he hates to see any creature happy, any soul glad; and when he sees a soul coming to Christ, he says, "Ah! I have nearly lost him; I shall never have an opportunity of bringing thundering condemnation into his ears, and dragging him about in the flames of hell as I thought; and now before he is gone, I will do something; the last grip shall be a hard one; the last

blow shall be dealt with all my power;" and down he comes upon the poor soul, who falls wallowing upon the earth in despair and doubt; then he tears him, and will not leave him until he has worked as much of his way with him as the Lord will let him. Don't be afraid, child of God. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you;" and even though he may cast you to the ground, remember that the righteous falleth many times, but he riseth up again; and so shalt thou, and the designs of the enemy shall be frustrated, as it is written, "Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee."

III. In the third place, there is the DEVIL'S DISCOVERY. I do not think the devil would be able to throw one poor sinner to the ground if he came as the devil; but it is seldom he does that. He presents himself as an angel of light, or even as the Holy Spirit. He knows that the Holy Spirit does all the work of salvation, and therefore he tries to counterfeit the operations of the Holy Ghost. He knows it is the Holy Spirit's work to take away pride from man and to humble the soul. Well, Satan counterfeits that blessed work, and takes away *hope* from man as well as pride. Under the pretense of humbling the poor sinner, and telling him that he ought to lay lower in the dust, he not only humbles the poor soul, but puts it down so low that he dishonors God too, in the sinner's estimation, by telling him that God himself can not save him. Satan will try, if he can, to mar God's work, while it is yet upon the potter's wheel, by putting on his own instrument while the clay is whirling round upon the wheel, that it may not assume the Holy Ghost's shape, but that there may be some marks of the devil's workmanship in the article. Sometimes you ask God that you may be able to agonize in prayer. "That is right," says Satan, "agonize in prayer; but remember, you must *now* receive the mercy, or you are lost." So he glides in and adds a little piece to the truth, making you believe it is an impulse of the Holy Spirit, while it is, after all, a deception of the father of lies. The Holy Ghost tells you that you are a lost sinner and undone. "Ah!" says the devil, "you are, and you can not be saved;" and thus again, under the very garb of the Spirit's operations, he deceives the soul. It is my firm belief that very much of the experience of a

Christian is not Christian experience. Many Christians experience things that have nothing to do with Christianity, but more to do with demonology. When you read the convictions of John Bunyan, you may think that all that terror was the fruit of the Holy Spirit; but, be assured, it was the fruit of Satanic influence. You may think it is God's Holy Spirit that drives sinners to despair, and keeps them shut up in the iron cage so long. Not at all. There was God's Holy Spirit, and then Satan came in to mar the work if he could.

Now I will give the poor sinner a means of detecting Satan, so that he may know whether his convictions are from the Holy Spirit, or merely the bellowing of hell in his ears. In the first place, *you may be always sure that that which comes from the devil will make you look at yourselves and not at Christ.* The Holy Spirit's work is to turn our eyes from ourselves to Jesus Christ, but the enemy's work is the very opposite. Nine out of ten of the insinuations of the devil have to do with ourselves. "You are guilty," says the devil —*that is self.* "You have not faith"—*that is self.* "You do not repent enough"—that is self. "You have got such a wavering hold of Christ"—that is self. "You have none of the joy of the Spirit, and therefore can not be one of his"—that is self. Thus the devil begins picking holes in us; whereas the Holy Spirit takes self entirely away, and tells us that we are "nothing at all," but that

"Jesus Christ is all-in-all."

Satan brings the carcase of self and pulls it about, and because that is corrupt, tells us that most assuredly we can not be saved. But remember, sinner, it is not *thy hold* of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not *thy joy* in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that is the instrument—it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Christ, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Christ, the author and finisher of thy faith; and if thou do that, ten thousand devils can not throw thee down, but as long as thou lookest at thyself, the meanest of those evil spirits may tread thee beneath his feet.

You may discern the devil's insinuations in another way *they generally reflect upon some attribute of God.* Sometimes they reflect upon his love, and tell you that God will not save you; sometimes upon his long suffering, and they tell you you are too old, and that God won't save you; sometimes upon his sovereignty, and they tell you that God does not choose as he wills, but that he has respect to characters, and takes men according to their merits; sometimes they reflect upon God's truth, and they tell you that he will not keep his promise; ay, and sometimes they reflect upon the very being of God, and tell you that there is not such a one. But O poor trembling soul, Satan shall not get an advantage over thee; but take care—detect him; and when thou hast found out the devil, thou hast frustrated his aims as far as thou art thyself concerned.

IV. Now, in the last place, we have to consider the DEVIL'S DEFEAT. How was he defeated? Jesus rebuked him. Beloved, there is no other way for us to be saved from the castings down of Satan but the rebuke of Jesus. "O," says one poor soul, "many months and years have I been distressed for fear I should not be saved; I have gone from place to place in hopes that some minister might say something which should rebuke the evil spirit." Sister, or beloved brother, have you not been doing wrong? Is it not Jesus who rebukes the evil spirit? Or perhaps you have been trying to rebuke the evil spirit yourself; you have tried to argue and dispute with him; you have said that you are not so vile as he described you to be. Beloved, have you not been doing wrong? It is not your business to rebuke Satan. "The Lord rebuke thee," that is what thou shouldst say. O! if you had looked to Jesus and said, "Lord rebuke him," he had only need say, "Hush!" and the demon would have been still in a moment, for he knows how omnipotent Jesus is, since he feels his power. But you get striving to pacify your own heart when you are under these temptations, instead of remembering that it is Jesus only who can remove the affliction. If I had one here who suffered the most from this ailment—the possession of Satan, I would say to him, Beloved, sit down; remember Jesus; go to Gethsemane, and depend upon it the devil will never stay there

with you; think on the agonies of your Saviour covered with his blood; the devil can not bear Christ's blood—he goes howling away at the very thought of it. Go to the pavement where Christ endured the accursed flagellation; the devil will not stay long there with you; and if you sit at the foot of his cross and say—

> "O! how sweet to view the flowing
> Of his ever-precious blood,"

you will not long find the devil vexing you. It is no use to get praying simply. Prayer is good in itself, but that is not the way to get rid of Satan—it is thinking of Christ. We get saying, "O, that I had a stronger faith! O, that I had love to Jesus!" It is good for a Christian to say that, but it is not enough; the way to overcome Satan and to have peace with God is through Christ, "I am the way;" if thou wouldst know the way, come to Christ, "I am the truth:" if thou wouldst refute the devil's lies come to the truth. "I am the life:" if thou wouldst be spared from Satan's killing, come to Jesus. There is one thing which we all of us too much becloud in our preaching, though I believe we do it very unintentionally—namely, the great truth that it is not prayer, it is not faith, it is not our doings, it is not our feelings upon which we must rest, but upon Christ, and on Christ alone. We are apt to think that we are not in a right state, that we do not feel enough, instead of remembering that our business is not with self, but Christ. Our business is only with Christ. O soul, if thou couldst fix thy soul on Jesus, and neglect every thing else—if thou couldst but despise good works, and aught else, so far as they relate to thy salvation, and look wholly, simply on Christ, I feel that Satan would soon give up throwing thee down, he would find that it would not answer his purpose, for thou wouldst fall on Christ, and like the giant who fell upon his mother, the earth, thou wouldst rise up each time stronger than before. Have I then within hearing one poor, tried, tempted, devil-dragged soul? Has Satan been pulling you through the thorns, and briars, and thickets, until you are scarred and bruised? Come now, I have tried to preach a rough sermon to you because I knew I had rough work to do

with roughly-used souls. Is there nothing here, poor sinner, that thou canst lay hold upon? Art thou so locked up that not one ray of light comes through the iron bars? What! art thou so chained that thou canst not move hand or foot? Why, man, I have brought thee a pitcher and a piece of bread to-day even in thy dungeon. Though thou art cast down, there is a little here to comfort thee in what I have said; but O! if my Master would come he would bring more than that, for he would rebuke the unclean spirit, and it would immediately depart from thee. Let me beseech thee, look only to Christ; never expect deliverance from self, from Satan, from ministers, or from means of any kind apart from Christ; keep thine eye simply on him; let his death, his agonies, his groans, his sufferings, his merits, his glories, his intercession, be fresh upon thy mind: when thou wakest in the morning look for him; when thou liest down at night look for him. O! let not thy hopes or fears come between thee and Christ; seek only Christ; let the hymn we sang be thy hymn and thy prayer—

> "Lord, deny me what thou wilt,
> Only ease me of my guilt;
> Prostrate at thy feet I lie;
> Give me Christ, or else I die."

And then, even though the devil throw thee down and tear thee, it were better he should do so now than that he should tear thee forever.

I have some here, however, who will laugh at what I have been preaching this morning. Ah! sirs, you may do so; but bitter though my text may be, I wish you had it in your mouths. Though sad be the experience of being torn when coming to Christ, I had rather see you so than see you whole away from Christ. It is better to be rent in pieces coming to the Saviour, than to have a sound, whole heart away from him. Tremble, sinner, tremble, for if thou comest not to Christ, he shall rend thee at last; his eye shall not pity, neither shall his hand spare thee. He hath said, "Beware ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver." Sirs, within another hour, and some of you may know this

certainly, before long there are some who will be torn in pieces by the wrath of God. Why will ye die? Why will ye die? You can not answer the question, I think; but let it rest upon your hearts. What profit will you have in your own blood? What will you profit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul? Remember, Jesus Christ can save even you. Believe on his name, ye convinced sinners, believe on Christ. The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen. C. O.

SERMON XX.

CHRIST—THE ROCK.

"And that Rock was Christ."—1 CORINTHIANS, x. 4.

It is a fact which we have on record in the sacred Scriptures, that there were two rocks, both of which gave forth water in the wilderness to supply the needs of the multitudes who were passing through the desert. Some have supposed that the Apostle Paul stated that there was only one rock whereas, on carefully reading what he says, you will see that he merely observed, they "did all drink *the same* spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." Whatever that rock might be of which the tribes of Israel drank, they all drank the same; there were not two rocks at one time; they all drank of the same rock which followed them, whichever of the two rocks it might be; and that rock, referring to either as you please, was Christ. Whether you regard the first rock of Horeb, or the second rock of Kadesh, both were types of Jesus Christ. Some may hint, that if there were two rocks there may be two Christs. By no means, my friends. There was a fresh scape-goat every day of atonement, but that does not imply that there is to be a new Christ every year. A lamb was to be offered every morning and every evening, but who would infer from this that there were as many Christs as lambs. So, if there have been two rocks, there have been two types of Christ in as many different characters. We may say, both of the rock Rephidim and the rock Kadesh, "And that Rock was Christ." Understand, *there were two rocks*, but not two rocks at a time; and, therefore, they did all drink of *the same* spiritual drink, which flowed from *the same* spiritual Rock, "and that Rock was Christ."

Our object will be to show you that both the rocks were most eminent types of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who, being smitten, gives forth water for the refreshing of his people, and who follows them all the desert through with his refreshing floods. Let me trouble you to turn to the first passage, which we will endeavor to explain, in the 17th of Exodus. I shall not tarry even for a moment to hint at the various views of Jesus Christ in which he might be regarded as a rock, as being immutable, remaining constantly in the same position, as being a refuge from the stormy wind and tempest, or as being the place where all those who love him are hidden from the storms of avenging justice. That does not happen to be the subject to which I invite your attention. The subject is not Christ as a rock, but Christ as a rock in the wilderness, from which the water gushes out.

Permit me now to request an attentive perusal of the following Scripture:

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us, and our children, and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb: and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?"—EXODUS, xvii. 1–7.

THIS FIRST ROCK WAS CHRIST PERSONAL.

In the first place, we remark, that the rock of Rephidim, or Horeb, was a remarkable type of Christ FROM THE FACT OF ITS NAME. It is called Horeb; and on referring to the dictionary

of names you will find that the word "Horeb" signifies "barrenness;" it is also called Rephidim, which signifies "beds of rest." Now, it is remarkable that these two names should belong to one rock; but both titles may be well applied to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

First, he was the Rock of *Horeb:* that is to say, he was a rock in a barren and dry land. Isaiah prophesied of him, that he should be a "root out of a dry ground," and so he was. He came out of a family which, although once royal, was then almost extinct. His father and his mother were but common people, of the tradesmen class; the glories of the royal line of David had been forgotten among the people; nevertheless, out of it came Jesus Christ, the man "chosen out of the people," that he might be exalted to be ruler over God's chosen Israel. Isaiah said, "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." If any one had looked upon the steep and rugged sides of Horeb, covered with thorn-brakes and bushes, he would never have dreamed that there could be concealed within so stubborn a rock a flood of water sufficient to supply the wants of multitudes. He would have held up his hands in astonishment, and exclaimed: "Is it possible? You may dig water out of barren sand, but I can not suppose it possible that even God himself could fetch water out of that adamantine rock." So, looking on Jesus, the Jews said: "Can he be the Saviour long foretold to usher in the age of gold? Can he be the Messiah? He, the carpenter's son? Can this be he who comes to redeem us from our oppressors, and to found a kingdom which shall never have an end? Is this the Jesus who is to come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth?" They could not expect salvation from him: he seemed to be a rock of barrenness, and they would not allow that he could become the Saviour of a mighty nation; that he could be one from whose riven side should flow healing streams of blood and water to wash and purify his children.

Mark, also, the other name—*Rephidim*, or the beds of rest. Doth not this title sweetly apply to the Lord? Although he be indeed as Horeb to his enemies, yet is he not a very

Rephidim to his friends? He said himself, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and he does give us rest. We should little expect to find rest upon a rock, but there is no rest elsewhere. We may rest upon the soft down of earth, but we shall find it to be hard for our heads at the day of judgment. We may pile up for ourselves stately mansions of our own works, and hope there to find rest; but there is no rest save that which remaineth for the people of God. Jesus to us is our only rest—the only one needed, and the only one possible. My dear friends, are you now regarding Christ as Horeb, that is, waste and barren; or can you look upon him as your Rephidim—your rest? Can you say, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations?" Canst thou, like John, put thy head upon the bosom of the Lord Jesus? Canst thou say that thou hast believed and hast entered into rest? If so, then thou art a true child of God, and thou mayest rejoice that he who had no comeliness, is comely to thee; and he who seemed to be every thing save what men expected, is to thee all thy salvation, and all thy desire.

It may be fanciful, perhaps, to refer to these names, but I had rather discover too much in God's word than find too little in it. The names seem to me extremely significant, and, therefore, I have mentioned them both as applicable to Jesus Christ.

Notice, in the next place, that this rock, like our Saviour, GAVE FORTH NO WATER TILL IT WAS SMITTEN. Our Lord Jesus was no Saviour except as he was smitten; for he could not save man unless by his death. It is true that patriarchs ascended to heaven before our Saviour died, but it was by the foresight of his death. If any of us shall be privileged to behold the city of the Most High in glory, we can only enter there through his agonies. I can have no trust for my eternal salvation in the simple man Christ Jesus, or even in the God over all blessed forever. It is not Christ who is my salvation, unless I put with it his cross; it is Christ on Calvary who redeems my soul. Had he still abode in heaven, sitting on his lofty throne, he could never have been the ransom of the human race. With all the mighty love of his heart, he could

never have redeemed unless he had been "smitten of God and afflicted." He was our Saviour from before all worlds, viewed so in the eternal covenant; but it was because he was looked upon as the smitten Saviour, slain before the foundation of the world. There is no hope for thee, my friend, anywhere but in the smitten Jesus. Thou mayest bow down to worship his exalted head, but that exalted head can not save thee apart from the thorn-crowned brow. Thou mayest go to the Christ who grasps the scepter, but remember, Christ with the scepter could not be thy Saviour unless he had been first Christ with the nail. Thou mayest approach Christ whose robes are clouds of glory, but remember, he who is clothed in splendor could not have been thy Redeemer unless he had first of all been clothed in the scarlet of mockery, and brought forth with the infamous *ecce homo*, "Behold the man." It is Christ the sufferer who redeems us. The rock yields no water till it is smitten, and so the Saviour yields no salvation until he is slain. Learn, then, believer, in all thy contemplations of thy Saviour, to consider him as the Smitten One, for it is thus, despised and afflicted, with the scars of vengeance on him—it is thus he becomes thy Redeemer, and the giver of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Notice, again, this rock must be smitten in a peculiar manner; it must be SMITTEN WITH THE ROD OF THE LAWGIVER, or else no water will come forth. So our Saviour Jesus Christ was smitten with the sword of the lawgiver on earth, and by the rod of his great Father, the lawgiver in heaven. None but Moses might smite the rock, for he was king in Jeshurun, and as God in the midst of the people. So with our Saviour. It is true the Roman nailed him to the tree; it is true the Jew dragged him to death; but it is equally true that it was *his Father* who did it all. It is a great fact that man slew the Saviour, but it is a great fact that *God* slew him too. Who was it said, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow?" The prophet tells us, when he adds, "saith the Lord." It was God who delivered up his Son for us all, and who will now also with him freely give us all things. Christ had been no Redeemer unless *his Father* had smitten him. There would have been no acceptable sac-

rifice, even if the Jew had dragged him to death, or the Roman pierced his side, unless the Father's scourge had fallen on his shoulders—unless the Father's sword had found a sheath in his blessed heart. It was the sword of the lawgiver that smote Jesus Christ, and made him our acceptable sacrifice. Believer, take a view of this great fact; it will help thee to adore God the Father and the Son most solemnly. Remember, it was the Father who smote the Saviour; remember, it was the Son who bore the Father's smart. It was not the cruel whip; it was not the crown of thorns; it was not the nail alone that made Christ the Saviour: it was the saying, "*My God, my God*, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was not Pilate, it was not Herod that put him to death as our Saviour; they put him to death as a reputed malefactor; but it was God who gave him up to die for us. His Father said, "Take him, let him die." It was from heaven that the execution warrant came; it was from God that the blow was struck; and if it had not been from the Father, we had all been damned, even though a Saviour died. It was necessary that the rod of the lawgiver should smite this Rock of Ages, to bring out from it plenteous streams of water, which should bring pardon and peace to dying souls.

Note, in the next place, that when the rock was smitten it was SMITTEN PUBLICLY. You read in the 5th verse, "Go on before the people and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod." It was not done in secret, in a dark place of the earth; but it was done before the elders. Even so our Saviour, when he was put to death, was not executed in private; but he was taken to the summit of the hill of Golgotha, and there, amid the assembled multitude, amid ribaldry and jeers, contempt and mockery, he died. The elders of the people were there; the *rich* man was there, in his pride and pomp, looking up to a dying Saviour, and scorning him, because he was of mean origin. *Poor* men were there, shouting with wicked voices, "Crucify him, crucify him," and pointing with their fingers, and rudely wagging their heads at the mighty Prince who was then expiring. The *wise* man was there, the man of the Sanhedrim, the representative of earth's philosophy and wisdom, and he said, "If he be the Christ, let

him come down from the cross." The *unlettered* man was there; he also laughed him to scorn, and thrust out his tongue in ignorant and vulgar jest. The *righteous* man was there; righteous in his own esteem, with the phylactery between his eyes—with the broad border to his garment. The chief of *sinners* was there, for there hung the thief expiring on the tree. All kinds of men beheld the smitten Lord. The *Jews* were assembled in multitudes; the *Romans*, too, taking a prominent part as the representatives of the Gentile race. In fact, being near the time of the passover, there were gathered together Greeks, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia. Persons out of all nations, standing as the representatives of the whole earth, saw the Saviour die, even as the elders stood as the representatives of all the tribes of Israel.

There is another thing which we can not pass by. This rock, which was smitten, and thus represented the humanity of our Saviour offered up for our sins, had DIVINITY ABOVE IT; for you will notice in the 6th verse, "Behold, *I* will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb." Although it was a barren rock, and so represented Christ's condition of dishonor; although it was a smitten rock, and so represented his suffering humanity; yet over that rock the bright light of the Shechinah shone. God, with outstretched wings of cherubim, stood over the rock, and the people saw him; there was a manifestation of deity upon the rock of Horeb. And so at Calvary. Albeit that it was Christ who died, very man of very man, yet there was enough of deity about Calvary's smitten rock to show that God was there. There was the midday-midnight; there was the swathing of the sun in clouds of darkness; there was the rending of the rocks, the tearing in sunder of the vail, the waking of the dead, the terrifying of the multitudes. God was there: there was deity there as well as humanity. "*I*, behold even *I*, will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb." I think God thus revealed himself to show us that Christ the Rock was divine as well as human. O! how sweet it is to contemplate the complex person of our dear Redeemer; to behold him as very man suffering for us, and yet to behold him as very God,

sitting unsuffering in the highest heaven. I remember what Harrington Evans sweetly says, that we make a great mistake when we deify the humanity of Christ, and we make an equal mistake when we bring down the divinity of Christ to the level of his humanity. We should remember Christ's human person was a human person as much as ours; that it did suffer, was tempted, and was tried, even as ours. We must not suppose that the divinity of Christ has taken away in the least degree from his humanity; yet, while we behold him as the wayfaring man, full of sorrows and acquainted with grief, we must not forget that he was very God of very God at the same time that he was very man. Though his manhood stood most apparent, suffering for the sin of man, yet there was also a sufficiently bright light in the cloud to let men see that God was there; and, though death had grasped the man, yet the God stood mightiest of the mighty, conquering for us. God was at that first rock to teach us that Christ was divine as well as human.

I need scarcely hint at the other reason why this rock is like Jesus, viz., that WHEN SMITTEN THE WATER DID GUSH FORTH most freely, sufficient for all the children of Israel, and following them through all the journeys, until it pleased God to stop it in order to open another fountain, to give us another exhibition of Christ in another fashion.

Christ smitten, my beloved, gives out water for all thirsty souls; affording enough for every child of Israel. Christ smitten gives forth a stream which doth not flow to-day, nor to-morrow, but which flows forever; and as this stream availed the Israelites wherever they went, so does Jesus Christ, by virtue of his atonement and his grace, follow his children wheresoever they journey. If they are brought to the wilderness of Zin, or the realms of Kadesh, Christ shall follow them; the efficacy of his blood, the light of his grace, the power of his gospel, shall attend them in all their ten thousand wanderings, however tortuous may be their paths, however winding the track in which the cloudy pillar shall lead them. O! blessed Jesus, thou art indeed a sweet antitype of the rock. Once my thirsty soul clamored for something to satisfy its wants; I hungered and I thirsted for

righteousness; I looked to the heavens, but they were as brass, for an angry God seemed frowning on me; I looked to the earth, but it was as arid sand, and my good works had failed me. I had no righteousness of my own; all my wells were stopped up, and when the rulers dug the well with their staves, and sung, "Spring up, O well," still no water came. But well shall I remember, when thirsty my soul fainted within me, and God said, "Come hither, sinner, I will show thee where thou mayest drink," and he showed me Christ on his cross, with his side pierced and his hands nailed. I thought I heard the expiring death shriek, "It is finished," and when I heard it, lo! I saw a stream of water, at which I slaked my burning thirst; and here I am—

"A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood;
The streams of love I trace
Up to that fountain—God;
And in his mighty breast I see
Eternal thoughts of love for me."

But this I know, had I never seen the open fountain, I had never lived; had I not beheld that mighty stream flowing there, I had never washed away my thirst. And now that water ever attracts my soul, and when I want to slake my returning thirst, still to that fountain, like the panting hart, I hasten. To the incarnate God I flee: here I may quench my raging thirst, and drink and never die. O! sinners, do you want the living water? Christ gives it to you. O! wonder of wonders, he who said, "I thirst," says also, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:" he who had not a drop of water to moisten his lips, yet saith, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."—John, vii. 38. Come ye unto Christ, ye thirsty souls; come ye unto Jesus who are thirsty, for it is written, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

You see, then, beloved, that this rock is a type of Christ personally, it is a type of him as dying, smitten for our sins.

I have been brief on these particulars because I want to show you how both the rocks were types of Christ, and it may be somewhat instructive if I do so.

II. I must now request your attention to another scene in Numbers, xx. 1–13.

"Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into the wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them."

Of this second rock it may be said, "And that rock was Christ." Now I believe that the first rock was *Christ personal;* I believe

THE SECOND ROCK WAS CHRIST MYSTICAL.

You know what I mean by Christ mystically. You are aware that in Scripture the word Christ often stands for Christ's church, for the whole body of Christ's people, for

Christ the head, and for all the members. The first rock was Christ himself, the Man-God, smitten for us; the second rock is Christ the church, Christ the head and all the members together; and out of the church, and out of the church only, must always flow all that the world requires. There will never be any blessings given to the world except through the mystical body of Jesus Christ. As pardon and peace alone flow through the person of Christ crucified and smitten, even so the blessings given to the world can only flow through Christ the great head, and his body, the church. Now, I am going to show you the parallels here.

First, you will notice THE PLACE where this rock was situated. Two names are mentioned at the commencement of the chapter, just at the first. "Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin, in the first month, and the people abode in *Kadesh*." Now this was called the rock of Kadesh. *Kadesh* signifies holiness, and that is just where Christ mystically dwells. Christ mystically may always be known by his holiness. We can tell Christ's church by its being separated from the world. It dwells at Kadesh. It appears that it was in the wilderness of "*Zin*," which means "a buckler," and "coldness." It is true the church of God does stand in a double position. It stands in coldness and indifference with regard to the world, and it stands also secure, as in a buckler, with regard to its blessed God. Observe the name, for it is significant; the second rock was not Horeb—barrenness—as Christ was personally, but it was holiness—Kadesh, as Christ is now in his church; for the church is a holy church, justified through the righteousness of its blessed Lord; a holy church, sanctified by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and made free from sin. You may know the church of God, although it dwelleth in the tents of Kedar, and abideth among sinners, for it is always distinct, and pitches its tent at Kadesh, being holy, sanctified unto the Lord.

Now, beloved, having only hinted at the name, I want to show you the parallel here. You will notice the way in which the water was to be got out of the second rock; it was NOT BY SMITING, BUT BY SPEAKING: that was God's revealed will. He would have this rock bless the people, not by being smit-

ten again, but by speaking. So, beloved, it is God's revealed will that Christ mystically should bless the world by speaking. Christ's church sends forth rivers of living water every day by speaking. It is by the foolishness of preaching that God saves them that believe; he makes the church a stream, pouring floods of life and verdure upon all the barren lands of this world, which had else been, like the deserts of Sahara, given up to barrenness. He makes, or intends to make, the church a blessing by speaking. How can I bless the world? By speaking, and by speaking only. How can every Christian bless the world, and the church at large be made a blessing to the universe? Only by speaking. God has ordained the simple means of testifying the gospel of the grace of God to make the living floods of divine grace pour out upon the world. If any man wanteth life from Christ, he must get it by hearing the word of God; and if any of us desire to confer a blessing upon our fellow-creatures, it must be by speaking to them the blessed word of Jesus Christ.

But now notice, while it was God's revealed will that Christ mystically should bless the world by speaking, yet through the sin of Moses THE ROCK DID NOT PRODUCE WATER BY SPEAKING, BUT BY SMITING. The rock was smitten twice. Now here is a significant parallel. Christ's church was designed by God in his revealed will to bless the world simply by speaking; but the wicked men of this world have smitten Christ again in his church; they have persecuted God's people, and the main benefit which the church now confers upon the world, generally speaking, comes through the smiting of persecution. Moses smote that rock not once, but twice, to show that if possible Christ's people should be even more persecuted, tormented, and plagued than their leader. He smote it twice; the water did not gush out at first: to show that protracted persecution would be necessary to bless the world; and that the wicked world would be sure to smite the church over and over again, before the world would be wholly blest.

But although the smiting was a sinful act, THE WATER CAME FORTH, to show by persecution the church has been made a blessing to the world. The funeral piles of Smithfield have scattered sparks over this land, which have lit up a thousand

fires. The smiting of God's gospel rock, the church, has scattered drops of precious water to lands where else it would never have flowed. It has been by persecution that the seeds of life have been scattered, like the seeds which are blown about by the winds from plants which else might have died childless. Persecution takes up the words of God's children, and scatters them abroad everywhere. Never was there a more significant act performed than when the ashes of Wickliffe were dug up and cast into the river, from whence they were carried to the sea, and then to the shores of every land. So it is with Christ now mystically; he must be scattered abroad, his ashes must be cast to the winds of heaven, that he may give life to distant nations, and that men may all hear the truth.

You see what I have intended; I hope I have made myself understood. This second rock is a type, not of Christ personally, but of Christ in his church; the Saviour of the world instrumentally, not mediatorially. It was not God's revealed will that his church should be the Saviour of the world by smiting, but by speaking; wicked men have run counter to the divine will, and have smitten the church, but, nevertheless, it has been found that the smiting of the church produces the best effects. The water gushes out. The more persecution—the more trouble the church has to endure, so much the more mighty those streams of living water from it, to the wide, wide world. I believe, my brethren, there is nothing in the world better for a man, or for a church, than a little persecution. Where had we been now, had it not been for slander, abuse, and contumely continually heaped upon our head? We believe our prosperity is in no small degree owing to our enemies. We had not been known, unless they charged us falsely; we had not been heard of, unless they had attempted to put us down—but they can not put us down by all they may say. The more they try to oppress us, the more do we multiply; and like the children of God in Egypt, the more they try to put them under the task, the more doth God our Father multiply and increase us. O! my brethren, never be ashamed of persecution. Remember you must be smitten. It is true God did not intend—he did intend secretly, but not according

to his revealed will—that you should be smitten; he is never pleased with those who smite you; he said you were to bless the world by speaking. Moses erred, and a wicked world has erred. Doubtless God decreed that Moses should smite that rock, though he did it sinfully. So God hath decreed that you should be smitten, that you may be of some use to the people. The fig will not ripen unless it be bruised; and thou wouldst not have ripened if thou hadst not felt the rod. The fountains of the deep earth would never send up their waters unless they were bored to the very bottom; so the Christian must be bored with trouble to make him give forth living water. It is said that the oyster hath no pearls unless it be sick; so it is true of the Christian that he will have no pearl unless he be persecuted. There will be little good done by any of us, unless we have some trials and troubles. The rock must be smitten; if it hath a double blow do not be afraid, for the rock was smitten twice, and the waters gushed out.

But I want you to notice that the rock, although smitten wrongly, was SMITTEN WITH THE ROD OF THE LAWGIVER. This delighted me when I first thought of it, that the second rock, that is Christ mystically, was smitten with the very same rod which smote the first rock, Christ himself. If I suffer for Christ, my sufferings are the sufferings of Christ; and, although they are occasioned by man as the second cause, yet they do really spring from God. "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous;" and when the wicked smite us, unwittingly to themselves, they do not smite with their own rod, but with the rod of God. God measures out our trials and our troubles, and let the enemy do what he may against me, he can not smite me with any thing except my Father's rod. My Father makes even Rab shakeh the rod of justice to Hezekiah, but Rab-shakeh can not smite with his own rod. It is God's rod that falls on his children. No child of God is ever smitten with any rod but God's. It may be that we think it comes from hell, but, in truth, it comes from heaven. Even though Judas betrayed his Master, we read, "whereunto he was appointed." And if our most intimate friend lift up his heel against us, even then God has given the dog leave to bark, no devouring lion roars against God's

children until God unchains his lips. No fierce leopard comes out of his den against an heir of heaven until God bids him. Even the devil himself becomes the servant of God: he can not smite God's child with any thing but God's rod. He had to go and ask God's leave to oppress one of his children; he had to ask whether he might afflict Job, and even then Satan could not afflict Job himself, but he besought God, saying, "Put out *thine* hand." It was God's hand that had to smite Job, even though Satan seemed to be the instrument. So, beloved, though thou art smitten by a rod, it is the same rod which fell upon the back of Christ.

Once more you will observe, you who are wont to persecute God's children, that although great results flowed from the smiting of the rock, yet MOSES WAS PUNISHED for doing it. Moses never entered the promised land, because he smote that rock. It was the emblem of Christ mystically, and even the smiting of the emblem had significance in it. Moses was commanded to speak, and not to smite; he rashly and wickedly did smite, and therefore was punished. Mark that, persecutor! Thou shalt be punished for thy persecution, whether it be by word or by deed. Whatsoever thou doest against a child of God shall be fearfully returned into thine own bosom. "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." I tell you men and women, there is pardon for all kinds of sin against the Son of God, even persecution; but if there be any thing which, when God doth punish, he visiteth with severe vengeance, it is this. Do you not remember how Herod, the proud persecutor, was eaten of worms? Have you never read of the fate of Antiochus Epiphanes, who put to death the glorious Maccabees, the testifiers of the truth? Have you never heard how Bishop Bonner died, who persecuted the Lord's children? Do you not know that persecutors seldom die in their beds, or if they do, they die as if the flames of hell were kindled about them, before they entered there? To be a persecutor is indeed a horrible thing; a sinner of any kind must be damned, if unsaved, but a persecutor must be sunk into the lowermost depths of the pit that is bottomless. Tremble, ye

who slander, and jeer, and ridicule, and oppress the children of God; remember, their Maker is mighty. They can not avenge themselves; they do not wish to; but remember, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord." It may be with some of you who are persecutors of God's children, that the word has gone out, and if so, O man, thou shalt never enter into the promised land, because thou hast smitten that rock. Yet if thou art a persecutor, hear God's truth: Paul says, "I was a persecutor and blasphemer, yet I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Have you done it ignorantly? Have any of you been persecuting God's children, not believing them to be his, but supposing them to be hypocrites? Hear this! Return, ye persecutors, return, ye who have sinned willfully against God; with him is plenteous redemption; he is able to blot out your transgressions, and wash you from your sins; yea, he will pass by all your iniquities, receive you graciously, and love you freely, if you will cry unto him with your whole heart. O! believe me, there is no sin which can damn a man if he have faith in Christ; there is no crime, however black, which can exclude a man from heaven, if he doth but believe in Jesus Christ; but if thou goest still on to thy grave a hoary-headed sinner against God, how awful will be thy fate when the fierce lions of his vengeance shall grind thy bones, or ever thou reachest the bottom of the den where thou hopedst to have destroyed Daniel. Thou shalt see him delivered, and thou shalt thyself be cast into the midst of demons fiercer than thou hast ever guessed, and flames more terrible than thou hast ever dreamed; ay, tremble; "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

May God bless what I have said, to your souls, for Jesus Christ's sake:

SERMON XXI

A VISIT TO CALVARY

"And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!"—JOHN, xix. 5.

It had been insinuated against Pilate, that he was in league with Jesus Christ to set up a new monarchy in opposition to that of Cæsar. In order to refute that accusation, Pilate orders Jesus to be scourged. The soldiers put upon his head a crown of thorns; they spit upon him; they pluck his hair, they buffet him; and when all these cruelties and insults have been exercised upon his person, Pilate brings forth Jesus Christ upon the balcony. Standing there, he addresses the people assembled in the street, tersely exclaiming, "Ecce homo," "Behold the man! This is the man with whom you charge me of conspiring against Cæsar. Is this how I would treat my accomplice? Would I in this way exercise my kindness for one whom I intended to set up as Cæsar's rival? Do you fancy that here you see marks of honor? Is that purple robe of shame the purple robe of the empire which you say I wish to fling upon his shoulders? Are these my kindnesses to my friend?" It must have been a very telling answer to their accusations; and they must have seen that a repetition of the charge would be a bare-faced falsehood Methinks, also, that Pilate had another purpose to serve by bringing up Jesus in this array of misery: he sincerely desired to deliver our Saviour from crucifixion, and he thought that, blood-thirsty as the people were, their vengeance would be satisfied at the sight of their victim in this extremity of suffering and misery, and they would then say: "Let him go." "Surely," he thought, "it will satisfy them; though they had demon's hearts, this might content them; though,

like fiends, they thirst for cruelty, surely this were quite enough." But no; like the wolf which hath tasted blood, they were insatiable, and the very sight of his emaciated form, stained all over with the streaming gore, did but excite them the more loudly to cry: "Crucify him! crucify him!" We believe that one of Pilate's purposes *was* answered: the people no longer suspected him of being an accomplice with our Saviour. But the other purpose, blessed be God, *was not* accomplished; for if it had been, we had been unredeemed at this hour, and the sacrifice of Calvary had been unoffered for our redemption.

We shall leave Pilate, however, and I shall endeavor, by the help of God, to stand in Pilate's place, and with an infinitely different motive, to say to each of you: "Behold the man!" And may our Master be with us, and, by his grace, reveal our Lord Jesus Christ, visibly set forth crucified among you! so that by the eyes of faith every one of you, whether you have seen him before or no, may now be enabled to look unto him who was crucified for our sins, who bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows!

A view of Christ on Calvary is always beneficial to a Christian. We never hear a sermon concerning Christ of which we disapprove, however inelegant in its diction, if it be sound in doctrine. We never complain of our minister that he preaches too much concerning the cross of Jesus Christ. No; there can be no tautology where his name is mentioned. Though a sermon should be a mere repetition of his name we would rejoice to hear it, and say:

> "Jesus, I love thy charming name;
> 'Tis music to mine ear."

The French king said of Bourdaloue, that he "would rather hear the repetitions of Bourdaloue than the novelties of another." So we can say of Jesus Christ, that we had rather hear the repetitions of Jesus than any novelty from any preacher whatsoever. O! how are our souls dissatisfied when we listen to a sermon destitute of Christ. There are some preachers who can manage to deliver a sermon and leave out Christ's name altogether. Surely the true believer will stand

like Mary Magdalene, over the sermon, and say: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Take away Christ from the sermon, and you have taken away its essence. The marrow of theology is Christ, the very bone and sinew of the gospel is preaching Christ. A Christless sermon is the merriment of hell. A Christless sermon is a fearful waste of time; it incurs the blood of souls, and dyes that man's skirts with gore who dares to preach it. But too much of Christ we can not have. Give us Christ always, Christ ever. The monotony of Christ is sweet variety, and even the unity of Christ hath in it all the elements of harmony. Christ, on his cross and on his throne, in the manger and in the tomb—Christ everywhere is sweet to us. We love his name, we adore his person, we delight to hear of his works.

Come, then, to Calvary awhile, with me, that there I may say to you as Pilate did in his palace: "Behold the man." We would take you there for one or two reasons; first, *to instruct your intellect;* secondly, *to excite your emotions;* and thirdly, *to amend your practice.* For we hold that religion consists of three things: *sound doctrine*, affecting the intellect; *true experience*, dealing with the emotions; and *a holy life*, fashioning the outward visible practice of every-day existence. Jesus Christ will benefit us in all these three; and if by faith we are enabled to see him now, we shall go away profited in each of these particulars—edified in doctrine, blessed in experience, and sanctified in practice.

I. First, we beseech you to "behold the man," TO INSTRUCT YOUR INTELLECT.

The first lesson I would indicate to you—for I shall not teach it, but leave HIM to teach it—is the lesson of *the evil nature of sin.* See there that man crucified, his hands extended. Do you mark the droppings of his gore? Do you see the thorny crown upon his head? Do you note the scars of misery upon him? Do you see his lacerated back as the wood doth tear it? Do you observe his eyes sunk in their sockets? Do you behold the dull, dead misery settled on his countenance? Do you perceive the acute, unutterable anguish which he suffers? Can you see him? If thou dost

ee aright thou wilt see in him the evil of sin. In no other place wilt thou ever know how desperately vile sin is. This is the spot where sin committed its direst crimes. Sin is exceeding sinful when it is a homicide, but it is most sinful when it turns *deicide*, and kills its God. The vilest deed sin ever did was when it nailed the Saviour to his cross, and there let him hang, the murdered victim, the victim of our sin.

Would you see sin? I might show you a thousand pictures of it. I might let you see fair Eden blasted and withered, with all its fruits smitten, the moisture of its trees dried up; its fair walks covered with the leaves of decay. I might show you a heavenly pair banished, with the cherubim behind them, driven out to till the ground whence they were taken; and when you saw that, you would execrate sin as a thing which drew the plowshare over paradise. I might make you hate sin, too, if I should show you, yonder, a drowned world, deluged by a flood. See there men, women, and children are sinking in the mighty waters—the deeps above and the deeps below are clasping hands. Did you not hear the shriek of the last strong swimmer in his agony, who has just now been overcome by the boundless, shoreless waves? Behold the earth dull and void, save where yon ark floats alone above the deluge. Do you require the cause of this desolation? What loosed the chambers of the great deep? What brought forth this destruction? *Sin* did it. And who smote Egypt at the Red Sea? What was that which devoured Sodom and Gomorrah and rained hail out of heaven upon them? What was that which swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and took them down alive into the pit? What was that which slew Sennacherib's host? What hath peopled death's dominions? Whence those skeletons and bones? Whence yon hearse and funeral? And what has builded the gloomy chambers of Hades? What has made Gehennah hot with unquenchable fire? And what is that which hath given hell its everlasting torments, and furnished it with inhabitants beyond number, who live in eternal tortures and twist themselves on uneasy racks of unutterable woe? *Sin*, thou didst all this; therefore do we execrate thee; thou didst drown a world; thou didst dig the grave; thou didst pile the faggots of hell. We hate

thee, sin; but yet methinks we might forgive thee if thou hadst not put Jesus Christ to death.

> "Who would know sin, let him repair
> Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
> A man, so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
> His skin, his garments, bloody be.
> *Sin* is that press and vice, which forceth pain
> To hunt his cruel food through every vein."

Christian, wilt thou not henceforth hate sin from this very fact, that the blood of thy Saviour is on it. Thou art tempted to do an act which thou knowest is wrong: it is fair, it is beautiful, it is goodly; examine it, it seems lovely and excellent, and thy heart goeth after it. Stop! Turn it round. Do you see the blood-mark on it? That sin is stained with thy Saviour's blood. Wilt thou touch it? Surely, nothing which has in the least contributed to his death can be loved by us. Will we not henceforth abjure, abhor, detest, and avoid every thing that is sinful? What! call yourselves Christians, and yet live in sin! Nurse in your bosom the murderer of your Saviour! Hang upon your walls the dagger wherewith your friend was stabbed, and embroider on your clothes the image of his murderers! Will you? Will you still harbor sin, and love it, when sin slew your Lord? Nay, surely your heart cries, "I'll take vengeance against my sins, and slay the murderers too."

Another lesson we would give your understandings is—"Behold the man," for then you will see *the inflexibility of divine justice.* Have we not heard that God's justice is inflexibly severe? If any man sin, the law saith, "Cursed is that man" The law alters not in its thunder. "Cursed! Cursed! Cursed!" sounds from Sinai every day. Have we not read that God has said, "He will by no means spare the guilty?" And do we not know it to be a fact? Yet, beloved, there be some who preach an atonement which looks very much like the alteration of divine justice. We have heard and read of many divines whose atonement is something like this: although God hath declared himself solemnly at wrath with man, and hath vowed to punish every sinner, yet Jesus Christ in some way did—

we understand not how—do something which allows God now to pass by our sins without punishing them at all. We understand not such an atonement as that. We believe that God is so just, that every sinner must be punished, that every crime must inevitably have its doom. We do not believe that the atonement of Christ remits a single solitary sin; we believe that all the punishment which God's people ought to have endured was laid upon the head of Christ. We look to Christ's cross, and we see God's justice unchanging, unvarying, when we hold the doctrine that all our guilt was laid upon his shoulders, and that the punishment for that guilt was actually and absolutely borne by Christ. God doth not absolutely pass over sin; he punishes sin in Christ, and henceforth sin ceases to be punishable in the persons of those for whom Christ died.

O ye who do not know how inflexible justice is, stand at the foot of yon cross, and hear *his* dying groans; stand there and see his looks of misery; mark his lineaments of woe, and ye shall know how severe is justice. No man ever thought Brutus so severely just as when he put his own sons to death. "Surely," they said, "he will spare them." But, no; the inflexible senator said, "They have broken the laws of my country, and they shall die." And so in a higher and more sublime sense, we might never have known how just God was, if he had not put his own son to death. Bring forth the sinner, justice! bring forth the sinner! "Nay," saith justice, "I will let the sinner go free; but here is the sinner's substitute." Bring him forth, O justice! "Art thou the substitute for sin?" "I am, my Father, I am." "Well, my son, I love thee, I have loved thee; but since thou art become the substitute for sinners, I will punish on thy head every sin which they did commit." See! the lash is uplifted: will it not fall gently on *his* shoulders? He is the Son. See there! the sword is unsheathed. O sword, sleep in thy scabbard; he is the Son! he is the Son!! Aye, but Son though he be, he is the sinner's representative, and he must die. Mark how the sword unsparingly smites him; see how the rod falls on him; mark how thongful after thongful of his quivering flesh is torn off as they lash him at Pilate's pillar; mark how he bleeds at every pore, while in the garden he sweats under his

Father's wrath. O! brethren, God is just; but we never know that half so well till in Gethsemane's glooms and in the midst of Golgotha's horrors we have tarried for awhile. What thinkest thou, O unpardoned man or woman? If God punished his Son, surely he will punish thee. If Christ, who only had *imputed* guilt, must suffer like this, how wilt thou suffer! or thou hast *thine own* sin. If *he*, the perfect, the pure, the potless, must suffer so fearful an amount of agony, how shalt *thou* escape if thou dost neglect so great salvation? How hopest thou to be delivered, if on his Son's head such vengeance fell? Where, where wilt thou find a covering for thyself? Know this, that he who is awfully just, not having remitted the penalty, but having exacted all at Christ's hands, will surely exact it at thine if thou diest impenitent, and if thou approachest before his bar unshriven and unwashed in a Saviour's blood.

Next, we think we may learn here *the omnipotence of love.* O Love, thou art the conqueror of all hearts. O Love, thou art the sum of Godhead, thou art the explanation of divinity. What is this world, this great world of ours, but "love" spelled out large? The stars, if we could read them rightly, spell "love." If we could interpret the language of the floods, we should hear them whispering "love." And could we gather together all flowers, and distil their essence, and get an extract from them, we should find that its smell was "love." Every thing in this world telleth of love. But would you know the heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of the love of God which passeth knowledge, come hither to the cross. We never know our own love to our country till we are called to make some sacrifice for it. You remember that in Russia there was a law which exempted the only son of a widow from going to war; but it is said that so closely were they driven for recruits, that the law was for a time rescinded, and the widow's only son was taken. Suppose such a thing happened here, and there should be a widow whose only son was demanded of her. See her come forward, saying, "Ay, take him; my country is dearer to me even than he is." She puts him forward, and says, "Go forth, my son, to die if it be necessary; I give thee up, I give thee willingly." You see

the red, red eye of the widow; she hath wiped it dry, but she hath wept in secret; and if we steal behind the door when her son is gone, and see her pouring out whole floods of sorrow, we can tell how great must have been her love for her country which made her give up him—her all. Beloved, we never should know Christ's love in all its heigths and depths if he had not died; nor could we tell the Father's deep affection if he had not given his Son to die. As for the common mercies we enjoy, they all sing of "love," just as the sea-shell, when we put it to our ears, whispers of the deep sea whence it came; but ah! if you desire to hear the ocean itself, if you would hear the roarings of the floods, you must not look at every-day mercies, but at the mercies of that night, that day, that midday night, when Christ was crucified. He who would know love, let him retire to Calvary and see the Man of Sorrows die:

> "While from his head, his hands, his feet,
> Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
> Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
> Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

II. Now, beloved, we come to the cross to EXCITE OUR EMOTIONS. We will again go to Calvary in imagination, and if God help us, by something more than that; we will endeavor to hold fellowship with Christ, first, that our emotions of *sorrow* may be excited. We do not love a sorrowful religion, but we do not think any thing of that religion which hath no sorrow in it. That which is entirely made of sorrow came not from God, for God loves happiness, he rejoices to see his creatures happy, and his religion has that tendency; but still he who never knew spiritual sorrow hath not known spiritual joy; if we have never shed the tear of penitence, we must not expect to sing the song of acceptance. Go you to Calvary, if you would weep. There be times when we would give a world for a tear, when our icy hearts are so cold, that all the heat of mercy can not thaw them; when our iron souls are so hard that it seems impossible they should ever be moved. O! what would I give if I might sometimes weep at my Saviour's feet! You, Christians, who have long walked in his ways,

have you not sometimes cried, "O! if I could weep as once I did, when I was young and tender in the fear of God! Then I could pour my heart out in tears, but now this rocky heart will not weep; though there be things which I hear concerning Jesus that might make my heart run over at my eyes in perpetual torrents, yet I can not weep a single tear now!" Well, would you weep, come with me to Calvary. See there that Saviour with thorns upon his brow. Canst thou not afford a tear for *him?* See the wounds in his side. What! Canst thou not drop a tear of grief there, especially when I remind thee that he is thy best friend? Sure, might I say, "if you have tears prepare to shed them now." You ought to shed them while you see his hands nailed to the accursed wood, his feet nailed too, and his side gushing like a fountain of blood. Ah! well might we say—

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Did he die? Ay, he did. O! all ye clouds, ye floods, ye rains, dwell in mine eyes; my grief hath need of all the watery things that nature can produce. Let every vein suck up a river to supply mine eyes; for sure I have need to weep full rivers of grief, that I slew my Saviour. If by any accident I had killed my best earthly friend, I would go mourning all my days; but since I have slain my Saviour by my own accursed sin, O! let me carry to my grave my grief—not hopeless misery, but sorrow that I slew my Saviour. Can I ever hear that word Calvary without remembering the sad tragedy connected with it? Shall I ever see the cross without droping a tear upon it? Shall I ever hear the music of his name without mixing in it the plaintive notes of my grief, crying yet again—

"Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, thine,
And bathed in its own blood,
While all exposed to wrath divine
The injured sufferer stood."

Here let me weep myself away:

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away
'Tis all that I can do."

But, as we have said, religion is not all sorrow, nor much of it even. True religion makes us *happy;* it lights up the eye like the lamps of heaven; it makes our foot bound over this weary earth, and makes our soul elastic. They who have most religion will have least of misery, for religion will turn their bitterest draughts of grief into cups of joy. He who liveth near to Christ, come what may, must be blessed; but he who wandereth from him, give him all the mercies of this life, and he can not be happy, because he hath not God. Well, you poor distressed, you mourning souls, are you seeking to have joy in your hearts? Come, let me take you to Calvary. Your desponding hearts can never mourn long with the air of Calvary around you. Ready-to-Halt never leaned on his crutches when he went by the cross; for once, good man, he walked without them. Faint-Heart never carried his faint heart when he clasped that cross. No; his heart was as strong as Valiant-for-Truth's when he was there. Are you often given to depression of spirits? Do you labor under despondency? Let me for once prescribe to you; let me recommend you something which will effectually cure you. When thou art low and miserable, go into thy chamber, and there on thy knees think of him who groaned in Gethsemane, and thou wilt say, "What are all my sorrows compared with his?" Go up, then, think of Calvary, and when thou hast been there a little while, sing to thyself—

"O! how sweet to view the flowing
Of his soul-redeeming blood,
With divine assurance knowing
That he made my peace with God."

Or if thou canst not reach so high a flight as that, still say—

"Here I'd sit for ever viewing
Mercy's streams in streams of blood;
Precious drops my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God."

An infallible remedy for misery is the cross. If thou wilt mix the cross in thy cup, thou wilt find it like the tree cast into the fountain of Mara, it will make the water thereof sweet. If thou wilt take some of the gall Christ drank, that gall is marvelous—it maketh all other galls sweet. If thou wilt cut some of the shivers from the tree on which he hung, and prick thy veins when they are too full of murmuring lust, and therefore make thy spirit low and miserable, then the heavenly lancet shall effect its cure; and thou shalt know that Christ's cross maketh thee happy. The happiest men are those who know most of Christ. Do not tell us that the epicure is happy; tell us not that the dissipated man is happy, who says,

> "Fill up to the brim,
> Let the sparkling liquor kiss the rim."

Say not that he is happy who runneth the mad career of lust; say not that he is happy whose whole soul is set on ambitious desires: he is not—he is miserable, and let his conscience say "Amen;" he is miserable, and let the silence of the midnight (for he shakes at that hour) tell us so; he is miserable, and in his inmost heart he knows it; though the upper floods of his soul do sometimes seem to leap with joy, down in the deep caverns of his heart there is darkness—darkness, compared with which, midnight is as blazing day. If you would be happy—if you would rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, "behold the man!" the man of sorrows who hath died for you.

Again, there is another emotion which we think should always be excited when we behold the cross of Christ, and that is the emotion of the *most ardent love.* Believe me, beloved, to hold on in this world as a true Christian, requires much love to your Master. If you are content to conform to all the rules of society, when you think them wrong, you will go on well enough; but if you have a principle which will not let you stoop—if you have a soul within you which can not be cramped or fettered—if you say, "If I am right it is no folly to be singular, and if I stand alone, let the heavens fall, I must stand by my Lord," you will find that to persevere in such conduct as that, requires much love to the Saviour. If we knew Luther's heart when he stood before the assembly and

challenged them all, we should have seen deeply cut in it Christ's name. If you could know the heart of those who labor for men's souls amid obloquy, contempt, and shame, you would see stamped in the very center the name of Jesus Christ. You can not long persevere as a Christian in the midst of persecution and trouble unless you have much love to the Saviour. But, alas! we often hear persons complain that they can not love the Saviour. That is a common complaint, but there is one easy cure for it. The more you live with Christ the better you will love him. There are some people in the world of so unloveable a nature, that to see them once in seven years is quite enough, if you wish to love them: the less you know of them, perhaps, the better. But of Jesus Christ it can be said, the longer you live with him the better you will love him. Ah! ask the gray-headed saint whether he loves Christ more or less than he did. O! if you could have asked old Ignatius in the Roman theater whether he still loved his Master, would he not have said, "These many years have I served him; he never did me a displeasure; I can not curse him, but I can die for him!" Why do you not love Christ? It is because you do not live with him, and think enough of him, for

"Living with Christ his image we gain."

Do not try to pump yourselves up into a certain degree of love to Christ by some extraordinary means. Go and live with him, meditate upon him continually, picture to yourself his sufferings for you, and then you will love him—it will become easy to you, and he will lift up your hearts. Methinks it would have been almost impossible for any of us to have seen Christ when he was here below without loving him, if we once had grace in our hearts. Alas! we may look at him for ages without loving him, unless grace be within. One of the wishes of my soul is to see the Man Christ Jesus once more on earth. I do look for his pre-millennial advent, and expect he will come here again; and O! if we might clasp his feet, if we might kiss his bleeding hands, if we might see the pleasing luster of his eyes, which outshines the glories of the stars, then, *love him!* why we should none of us be saying, "I want

to love him," but we should love him at once, for we could not help it. O! if we are in fellowship with him, we shall never say "I can not love him," but we shall say,

> "His worth if all the nations knew,
> Sure the whole earth would love him too."

III. Now we come to the next point: "Behold the man" Christ Jesus that you may AMEND YOUR PRACTICE: for religion is not emotional, or intellectual, merely; it is practical also. That man has no religion, however beautifully varnished, if he does not carry it out in daily life. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Come with me to Calvary once more, and you will amend your practice.

Let me remind you of one thing, wherein your practice will be very much improved if you come to Calvary. Here are members of different denominations of Christ's church, but how often are we affected with that cruel disease, *bigotry!* How frequently are our spirits set against each other! Now, if we would love all Christians, we must "behold the man" Christ Jesus. We have seen Christians fight, and fight manfully against each other—we say manfully, for we can not use that other word we would have said; we have seen Christians fight woefully against each other; but there is one spot that never was yet profaned by the foot of controversy, and that is Calvary; there the word goes forth, "Sheath swords, combatants! the battle is over, this is holy ground;" here Jesus died. O! there is something that touches our hearts, when we begin to talk of Jesus. We care not who the man is, whether he be the sweet George Herbert, of the Church of England, or the equally excellent Rutherford, of the Church of Scotland, whether he be Dissenter, or Conformist, when he comes to talk of Christ, we all stand with him then. "Come," we say, "we would fight each other fearfully on other points, but when we come here we are all one in Christ Jesus;" and out go our hands at once, for we feel we are at one. That stroke, that touch, not of nature but of grace, makes the whole Christian world one at once. O! thou little-souled man, who hast no love for any unless he conform to thine own

sect, thou knowest little of Christ, for if thou livedst near to him, thou wouldst have a large heart.

Again, you will, by going to Calvary, amend your practice in regard to *outward holiness*. Do not tell me that man has any sense of Christ's love to him, who can wilfully sin against the Saviour. We do see some strange prodigies now and then, but the strangest of all would be a Christian who could afford to live like a worldling, and yet maintain communion with Jesus Christ. We have heard men talk of their experience, who can give us whole yards of godliness, if that consists in the tongue; but when they come to practice, ah! their religion is not made to bear every-day pressure, it is a kind of confectionery religion, not made to be carried about in the rough world; it was made more as an ornament for their drawing-room; a fashionable religion, a pretty religion, to come out on Sundays, and be carried to a place of worship; but it was never intended for business. The exchange—what! bring their religion there! why it would stand in the way of their business. Religion in their shop! Religion in their ordinary dealings! They never thought of such a thing; they thought religion was intended for their closet, though that has its door listed over; they thought religion was intended for them simply when they were reading the Bible, or turning over other religious books. Do you conceive that such men know Christ? Alas! no. Those who live near Jesus, those who "behold the man," will become like Christ. There is no such thing as having an interest in the blood of Jesus, and holding fellowship with him, and yet living in sin. Be not deceived concerning this. The follies and the fashions of this world are not consistent with godliness, and he who hopes to have Christ, and to have the world too, hath made a great mistake. Have you ever heard that pretty fable told by the Persian Saadi moralist? He took up in his hand a piece of scented clay and said to it, "Oh, clay, whence hast thou thy perfume?" And the clay said, "I was once a piece of common clay, but they laid me for a time in company with a rose, and I drank in its fragrance, and have now become scented clay." Believer, thou too art nothing but a piece of common clay, but if thou liest with the Rose of Sharon—if thou hast

Jesus in thy company, thou wilt be a piece of scented clay, and where'er thou goest, thou wilt smell of him. I will know the company thou keepest by the fragrance thou hast. If thou hast lain in beds of spices, thou wilt smell of the myrrh, and the spikenard, and the aloes. I will not believe thee a child of God, unless thou hast the lineaments of thy Father, nor will I think that thou hast been with Jesus, unless I can perceive that thou hast learned of him. Oh! if you would reform yourselves, if you would amend your lives, if you would curb sin, and restrain the hot-mouthed steeds of your lust—if you would overcome your iniquities, and persevere in holiness, here are the means: "Behold the man;" look you there at Christ Jesus.

Now I have only time to apply my text to all classes of you, and then I have done. "Behold the man!" It is an exhortation which I will use to every one of you. I have some here, I trust, who are weeping on account of sin. You have discovered yourselves to be lost and ruined by the fall. God's sovereign mercy has looked upon you, and taught you your own nothingness. You once thought your morality good enough, and that your own integrity would carry you to heaven; but now a hue and cry is raised in your soul concerning the fire of sin within you, and you have discovered that you are lost and ruined. To you I come to preach; to you especially:

> "Not the righteous, not the righteous;
> Sinners, Jesus came to save."

If you now acknowledge and feel yourselves to be sinners, the glorious gospel of the blessed God is, "Behold the man;" look there to Jesus; see your sin laid on *his* head; and mark there the awful expiation of your guilt. "Behold the man," is the lesson for penitents.

Allow me to tell you an anecdote, which I have often told before, because I love to tell it. A friend of mine, who has been a clergyman in Ireland related it to me himself as a veritable narrative. A clergyman of an Irish parish said, that "he went round to visit all his parishioners, but," said he, "there was one poor woman in the parish who had been an

abandoned character, and I dared not go to visit her, because I thought it would ill become my position, so I passed by. Ah! brother," he said, "I know it was an evil pride, or else I should have gone after the chief of sinners, for the care of her soul was in some measure committed to my hands." One day he saw her in church, and he thought he heard her repeating the responses, and fancied he saw the tears rolling down her cheek. O how his bowels yearned for her soul! He longed to speak with her, but he dared not. She came there month after month, a constant worshiper, and yet he passed by her door and did not visit her. At last one day she came to the door, and said, "Sir, I want you;" he then went in, and she put out her hand, and taking hold of his, said, "O, sir! if *your Master* had been in this village half as long as you have, I am sure he would have been to see me, for I am the worst sinner in the parish, and therefore I want his help the most; but though *you* have not been to see me, I know who has said: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'" Ah! and are not we chief of sinners too? You may never sin as she did; but you *have* sinned. You may not have openly transgressed as she did; but if God the Spirit be at work in your heart, you will be content to stand side by side with her, and both of you will say at once, "I the chief of sinners am."

Again, I must remind you that Jesus died for poor sinners, even for you. I will not speak to any other character but to you, but I will have an extra word with you now. O, would to God I could bring you now, poor penitent, to my Saviour's feet. Art not thou seeking rest and finding none? Man, where art thou seeking it? Art thou seeking it by the works of the law, and endeavoring, by leaving off this sin, and reforming that error, to save thyself? O, I charge thee, do not film the wound thus, for all the rancorous venom will still be within. Go not to Sinai, for on its thorny sides no mercies grow; go not there, for the thunder comes from the law; the law says, "Sinner, thou shalt die." But ah! my hearers, if you are guilty now, and laboring under a sense of condemnation, let me beseech you, let me implore you, by the love you

have to yourselves, to come to Christ, and believe in him, and you shall most assuredly find salvation. There never yet was a sinner spurned from his gates—shall you be the first? There never was a penitent sent away without a blessing; and if you now call on him, you shall not be rejected. Mercy's door is always open to the man who knocks with sincerity. Go thou and knock, and mercy shall be thine. What if thy sins are more than others? I thank God they are, for I have all the more ground to preach to thee. The only warrant to believe in Christ is that thou art a sinner. If thou knowest thy sinnership, thou mayest know the Saviour to be thy Saviour. Christ came to save sinners. Are you a sinner? If so, I can tell you, on scriptural authority, that Jesus came to save you. But ah! ye good moral people, who trust in your own works. Ah! ye who are sewing to yourselves fig-leaves, and working out day by day the garments of your own righteousness, you will find your good works to be utterly insufficient. All that is of nature's spinning, death will unravel. All that nature ever girded about the sinner was vain, worse than vain. O, cast thy righteousness away, thou moralist, cast thy good works away, and believe in Christ. A good man, when dying, was asked what he was doing, and he said, "I am throwing all my good works overboard, and am trusting wholly in Jesus; I am throwing my good works away, and lashing myself to the plank of free grace; for I hope to swim to glory on it."

I have done, but not till I have told you the way of salvation. It is written in God's word, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Do you ask me what it is to believe? To believe is to cast yourselves simply and wholly on the blood of Christ for salvation. I know of no better utterance of faith than this,

> "Nothing in my hands I bring;
> Simply to thy cross I cling."

God of his grace help you to say this. Amen.

SERMON XXII

TEACHING CHILDREN.

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me I will teach you the fear of the Lord."—PSALM xxxiv. 11.

IT is a singular thing that good men frequently discover their duty when they are placed in most humiliating positions. Never in David's life was he in a worse plight than that which suggested this Psalm. It is, as you read at the commencement, "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed." David was carried before King Achish, the Abimelech of Philistia, and, in order to make his escape, he pretended to be mad, accompanying that profession with certain very degrading symptoms which might well seem to betoken his insanity. He was driven from the palace, and, as usual, when such men are in the street, a number of children assembled round him. In after days, when he sang songs of praise to God, recollecting how he had become the laughing-stock of little children, he seemed to say, "Ah! I have lowered myself in the estimation of generations that shall live after me, by my folly in the streets before the children; now I will endeavor to undo the mischief." "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

Very possibly, if David had never been in such a position, he would never have thought of this duty; for I do not discover in any other Psalm that David said, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me." He had the cares of his cities, his provinces, and his nation pressing upon him, and was but little attentive to the education of youth; but here, being brought into the meanest position which man could possibly occupy

having become as one bereft of reason, he recollects his duty. The exalted, or prosperous Christian, is not always mindful of the lambs; that duty generally devolves on Peters, whose confidence and pride have been crushed, and who rejoice thus practically to answer the question, "Lovest thou me?"

Departing, however, from this thought, let me address myself to the text, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." First, I shall give you *one doctrine;* secondly, I shall give you *two encouragements;* thirdly, *three admonitions;* fourthly, *four instructions;* and fifthly, I shall give you *five subjects for children;* all taken from the text.

I. First, ONE DOCTRINE. "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The doctrine is, that *children are capable of being taught the fear of the Lord.* Men are generally wisest after they have been the most foolish. David had been extremely foolish, and now he became extremely wise; and being so it was not likely that he would utter foolish sentiments, or give directions such as would be dictated by a weak mind.

We have heard it said by some that children can not understand the great mysteries of religion. We even know some Sabbath-school teachers who cautiously avoid mentioning the great doctrines of the gospel, because they think the children are not prepared to receive them. Alas! the same mistake has crept into the pulpit, for it is currently believed, among a certain class of preachers, that many of the doctrines of the word of God, although true, are not fit to be taught to the people, since they would pervert them to their own destruction. Away with such priestcraft! Whatever my God has revealed ought to be preached. Whatever he has revealed, if I am not capable of understanding it, I will still believe, and preach it. I do hold that there is no doctrine of the word of God which a child, if he be capable of salvation, is not capable of receiving. I would have children taught all the great doctrines of truth without a solitary exception, that they may in their after days hold fast by them. I can bear witness that children *can* understand the Scriptures, for I am sure that when but a child I could have discussed many a

knotty point of controversial theology, having heard both sides of the question freely stated among my father's circle of friends. In fact, children are capable of understanding some things in early life, which we hardly understand afterward. Children have eminently a simplicity of faith. Simplicity is akin to the highest knowledge; indeed, we know not that there is much distinction between the simplicity of a child and the genius of the profoundest mind. He who receives things simply, as a child, will often have ideas which the man who is prone to make a syllogism of every thing will never attain unto. If you wish to know whether children can be taught, I point you to many in our churches, and in pious families—not prodigies, but such as we frequently see—Timothies and Samuels, and little girls too, who have early come to know a Saviour's love. As soon as a child is capable of being damned it is capable of being saved. As soon as a child can sin, that child can, if God's grace assist it, believe and receive the word of God. / As soon as children can learn evil, be assured that they are competent, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to learn good. Never go to your class with the thought that the children can not comprehend you; for if you do not make them understand, it is because you do not understand yourselves; if you do not teach children what you wish, it is because you are not fit for the task: you should find out simpler words more fitted for their capacity, and then you would discover that it was not the fault of the child, but the fault of the teacher, if he did not learn. I hold that children are capable of salvation. He who in divine sovereignty reclaimeth the gray-haired sinner from the error of his ways, can turn a little child from his youthful follies. He who in the eleventh hour findeth some standing idle in the market-place, and sendeth them into the vineyard, can call men at the dawning of the day to labor for him. He who can change the course of a river when it has rolled onward and become a mighty flood, can control a new-born rivulet leaping from its cradle fountain, and make it run in the channel he desireth. He can do all things; he can work upon children's hearts as he pleases, for all are under his control.

I will not stay to establish the doctrine, because I do not

consider that any of you are so foolish as to doubt it. But although you believe it, I fear many of you do not expect to hear of children being saved. Throughout the churches I have noticed a kind of abhorrence of any thing like early, childlike piety. We are frightened at the idea of a little boy loving Christ; and if we hear of a little girl following the Saviour, we say it is a youthful fancy, an early impression that will die away. My dear friends, I beseech you, never treat infant piety with suspicion. It is a tender plant—don't brush it too hard. I heard a tale some time ago, which I believe to be perfectly authentic. A dear little girl, some five or six years old, a true lover of Jesus, requested of her mother that she might join the church. The mother told her she was too young. The poor little thing was grieved exceedingly; and after awhile the mother, who saw that piety was in her heart, spoke to the minister on the subject. The minister talked to the child, and said to the mother, "I am thoroughly convinced of her piety, but I can not take her into the church, she is too young." When the child heard that, a strange gloom passed over her face; and the next morning when her mother went to her little bed she lay with a pearly tear or two on each eye, dead for very grief; her heart was broken, because she could not follow her Saviour, and do as he had bidden her. I would not have murdered that child for a world! Take care how you treat young piety. Be tender of it. Believe that children can be saved as much as yourselves. When you see the young heart brought to the Saviour, don't stand by and speak harshly, mistrusting every thing. It is better sometimes to be deceived than to be the means of ruining one. God send to his people a more firm belief that little buds of grace are worthy of all care.

II. Now, secondly, I will give you TWO ENCOURAGEMENTS, both of which you will find in the text.

The first encouragement is that of *pious example.* David said, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." You are not ashamed to tread in the footsteps of David, are you? You will not object to follow the example of one who was first eminently holy, and then eminently great. Shall the shepherd boy, the giant slayer, the

psalmist of Israel, and the monarch, tread in footsteps which you are too proud to follow? Ah! no; you will be happy, I am sure, to be as David was. If you want, however, a higher example, even than that of David, hear the Son of David while from his lips the sweet words flow, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." I am sure it would encourage you if you always thought of these examples. You teach children—you are not dishonored by it. Some say you are a *mere* Sabbath-school teacher, but you are a noble personage, holding an honorable office, and having illustrious predecessors. We love to see persons of some standing in society take an interest in Sabbath-schools. One great fault in many of our churches is that the children are left to the young people to take care of—the older members, who have more wisdom, taking but very little notice of them; and very often the wealthier members of the church stand aside as if the teaching of the poor were not (as indeed it is) the special business of the rich. I hope for the day when the mighty men of Israel shall be found helping in this great warfare against the enemy. In the United States we have heard of presidents, of judges, men of Congress, and persons in the highest positions—not condescending, for I scorn to use such a term, but honoring themselves by teaching little children in Sabbath-schools. He who teaches a class in a Sabbath school has earned a good degree. I had rather receive the title of S.S.T., than M.A., B.A., or any other honor that ever was conferred. Let me beg of you then to take heart, because your duties are so honorable. Let the royal example of David, let the noble, the godlike example of Jesus Christ inspire you with fresh diligence and increasing ardor, with confident and enduring perseverance, still to go on in your mighty work, saying, as David did, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

The second encouragement I will give is the encouragement of *great success*. David said, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me:" he did not add, "*Perhaps* I will teach you the fear of the Lord," but "I *will* teach you." He had success; or if *he* had not, others have. The success of Sabbath-schools! If I

begin to speak of that I shall have an endless theme; therefore I will not commence. Many volumes might be written on it, and then when all were written, we might say, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain all that might be written." Up yonder where the starry hosts perpetually sing his high praise—up where the white-robed throng continually cast their crowns before his feet—we may behold the success of Sabbath-schools. There, too, where infant millions assemble Sabbath after Sabbath, to sing, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," we see with joy the success of Sabbath-schools. And up here, in almost every pulpit of our land, and there in the pews where the deacons sit, and godly members join in worship—there is the success of Sabbath-schools. And far away across yonder broad ocean in the islets of the south, in lands where those dwell who bow before blocks of wood and stone—there are missionaries saved by Sabbath-schools, whose thousands, redeemed by their labors, contribute to swell the mighty stream of the tremendous, unexampled, incalculable, I had almost said infinite success of Sabbath-school instruction. Go on! go on! So much has been done; more shall be done. Let all your past victories inflame you with ardor; let the remembrance of campaigns of triumph, and of battle-fields, won for your Saviour in the realms of salvation and peace, be your encouragement for fresh duty.

III. Now, thirdly, I give you THREE ADMONITIONS.

The first is, *recollect whom you are teaching.* "Come, ye *children.*" I think we ought always to have respect to our audience, not that we need care that we are preaching to Mr. So-and-so, Sir William This, or My Lord That—because in God's sight that is a trifle; but we are to remember that we are preaching to men and women who have souls, so that we ought not to occupy their time by things that are not worth their hearing. But when you teach in Sabbath-schools, you are, if it be possible, in a more responsible situation even than a minister. He preaches to grown-up people—men of judgment, who, if they do not like what he preaches, have the option of going somewhere else; you teach children who have no option to go elsewhere. If you teach the child wrongly, he believes you; if you teach him heresies, he will receive

them; what you teach him now, he will never forget. You are not sowing, as some say, on virgin soil, for it has long been occupied by the devil; but you are sowing on a soil more fertile now than it ever will be—that will produce fruit now far better than it will do in after days; you are sowing on a young heart, and what you sow will be pretty sure to abide there, especially if you teach evil, for that will never be forgotten. You are beginning with the child; take care what you do with him. Don't spoil him. Many a child has been treated like the Indian children, who have copper plates put upon their foreheads, so that they may never grow. There are many who know themselves to be simpletons now, just because those who had the care of them when young gave them no opportunities of getting knowledge, so that when they became old they cared nothing about it. Have a care what you are after; you are teaching children; mind what you are doing. Put poison in the spring, and it will impregnate the whole stream. Take care what you are after, sir! You are twisting the sapling, and the old oak will be bent thereby. Have a care! It is a child's soul you are tampering with, if you are tampering at all; it is a child's soul you are preparing for eternity, if God is with you. I give you a solemn admonition on every child's behalf. Surely, if it be treachery to administer poison to the dying, it must be far more criminal to give poison to the young life. If it be evil to mislead gray-headed age, it must be far more so to turn aside the young heart to a road of error in which he may forever walk. Ah! it is a solemn admonition—you are teaching children.

The second is, recollect that *you are teaching for God.* "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." If you, as teachers, were only assembled to teach geography, I am sure I should not interfere if you were to tell the children that the north pole was close to the equator; if you were to say that the extremity of South America verged hard by the coast of Europe; I would smile at your error, and perhaps should even retain it as a joke, if I heard you assure them that England was in the middle of Africa. But you are not teaching geography or astronomy

nor are you teaching for business or for the world; but you are teaching them to the best of your ability for God. You say to them, "Children, you come here to be taught the word of God; you come here, if it be possible, that we may be the means of saving your souls." Have a care what you are after when you pretend to be teaching them for God. Wound the child's hand if you like, but, for God's sake, don't touch his heart. Say what you like about temporal matters, but I beseech you, in spiritual matters, take care how you lead him. O! be careful that it is the truth which you inculcate, and only that. And now how solemn your work becomes! He who is doing a work for himself, let him do it as he likes; but he who is laboring for another, let him take care how he does his work; he who is now employed by a *monarch*, let him beware how he performs his duty; but he who labors for *God*, let him tremble lest he does his work ill! Remember you are laboring for God. I say so, because you profess to be. Alas! many, I fear, even among you, are far from having this view of the matter.

The third admonition is—remember that *your children want teaching*. The text implies *that*, when it says, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." That makes your work all the more solemn. If children did not want teaching, I would not be so extremely anxious that you should teach them right; for works of supererogation—works that are not necessary, men may do as they please. But here the work is necessary. Your child wants teaching! He was born in iniquity; in sin did his mother conceive him. He has an evil heart; he knows not God, and he never will unless he is taught. He is not like some ground of which we have heard, that hath good seed lying hidden in its very bowels; but, instead thereof, he hath evil seed within his heart. God can place good seed there. You profess to be his instruments to scatter seed upon that child's heart; remember, if that seed be not sown, he will be lost forever, his life will be a life of alienation from God, and, at his death, everlasting fire must be his portion. Be careful, then, how you teach, remembering the urgent necessity of the case. This is not a house on fire needing your assistance at the en

gine, nor is it a wreck at sea, demanding your oar in the lifeboat, but it is a deathless spirit calling aloud to you, "Come over and help us." I beseech you, teach "the fear of the Lord," and that only; be very anxious to say, and say truly, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

IV. That brings me, in the fourth place, to FOUR INSTRUCTIONS, and they are all in the text.

The first is—*get the children to come to your school.* "Come, ye children." The great complaint with some is that they can not obtain children. Go and get them to come. In London we are having a canvass; that is a good idea, and you ought to have a canvass of every country village, and of every market town, and get every child you can; for David says, "Come, ye children." My advice then, is, get the children to come, and do any thing to effect it. Don't bribe them—that is the only plan we object to; it is only adopted in schools of the lowest order; schools of so mean a class that, even the fathers and mothers of the children have too much sense to send them there; but then farmer Brown won't employ them, or the squire will turn them out of their situations; or if the children don't go to the school on Sundays, they shall not go on week days. O, that beggarly trick of bribing! I wish there were an end of it; it only shows the weakness, and degradation, and abomination of a sect that can not succeed without using so mean a system. But, except that, don't be very particular how you get the children to school. Why, if I could not get people to come to my place by preaching in a black coat, I would have regimentals to-morrow. I would have a congregation somehow. Better do strange things than have an empty chapel, or an empty school-room. When I was in Scotland, we sent the bellman round a village to secure an audience, and the means was eminently successful. Spare no means. Go and get the children in. I have known ministers who have gone out in the streets on the Sunday afternoon, and talked to the children who were playing in the street, so as to induce them to come to the school. This is what an earnest teacher will do. "I say, John," he will say, "come into our school; you can not think what a nice school it is." Then he gets the children in, and, in his kind, winning man-

ner, he tells them some stories and anecdotes about girls and boys, and so on. And in this way the school is filled. Go and catch them any how. There is no law against it. You may do what you like in battle. All is fair against the devil. My first instruction then is, get children, and get them any how.

The next is, *get the children to love you*, if you can. That also is in the text. "*Come*, ye children, hearken unto me." You know how we used to be taught in the dame school, how we stood up with our hands behind us to repeat our lessons. That was not David's plan. "*Come*, ye children—come here, and sit upon my knee." "O!" thinks the child, "how nice to have such a teacher! a teacher that will let me come near him, a teacher that does not say 'go,' but 'come.'" The fault of many teachers is, that they do not get their children near them, but endeavor to foster a kind of awful respect. Before you can teach children you must get the silver key of kindness to unlock their hearts, and get their attention. Say, "Come, ye children." We have known some good men who are objects of abhorrence to children. You remember the story of two little boys who were one day asked if they would like to go to heaven, and who, much to their teacher's astonishment, said they really should not. When they were asked "why not," one of them said, "I should not like to go to heaven because grand-pa would be there, and would be sure to say, 'get along boys, get along boys.' I should not like to be along with grand-pa." If a boy has a teacher who always wears a sour look, but who talks to him about Jesus, what does the boy think? "I wonder whether Jesus was like you; if he was, I should n't like him much." Then there is another teacher who, if he is provoked ever so little, boxes the child's ears; and, at the same time, teaches him that he should forgive others, and how kind he ought to be. "Well," thinks the child, "that is no doubt very pretty, but my teacher does not show me how to do it." If you drive a boy from you, your power is gone, for you won't be able to teach him any thing. It is of no avail to attempt teaching those who do not love you. Try and make them love you, and then they will learn any thing from you.

The next instruction is, *get the children's attention*. That is

to the text. "Come, ye children, *hearken* unto me." If they do not hearken, you may talk, but you will speak to no purpose whatever. If they do not listen, you go through your labors as an unmeaning drudgery to yourselves and your scholars too. You can do nothing without securing their attention. "That is just what I can not do," says one. Well, that depends upon yourself. If you give them something worth attending to, they will be sure to attend. Give them something worth hearing, and they will certainly hearken. This rule may not be universal, but it is very nearly so. Don't forget to give them a few anecdotes. Anecdotes are very much objected to by critics of sermons, who say they ought not to be used in the pulpit. But some of us know better than that; we know what will wake a congregation up; we can speak from experience, that a few anecdotes here and there are first-rate things to get the attention of persons who won't listen to dry doctrine. Do you try and learn as many anecdotes in the week as possible. Wherever you go, if you are really a good teacher, you can always find something to make into a tale to tell your children. Then, when your class gets dull, and you can not get their attention, say to them, "Do you know the Five Bells?" and then they all open their eyes directly, if there is such a place in the village; or, "Do you know the turning against the Red Lion?" and then tell them something you may have read or heard just to secure their attention. A dear child once said: "Father, I like to hear Mr. So-and-so preach, because he puts some 'likes' into his sermon—'like this, and like that.'" Yes, children always love those "likes." Make parables, pictures, figures, for them, and you will always get on. I am sure if I were a boy listening to some of you, unless you told me a tale now and then, you would as often see the back of my head as my face; and I don't know, if I sat in a hot school-room, but that my head would nod, and I should go to sleep, or be playing with Tom on my left, and do as many strange things as the rest, if you did not strive to interest me. Remember to make them hearken.

The fourth admonition is, *have a care what you teach the children*. "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach

you *the fear of the Lord.*" Not to weary you, however, I only hint at that, and pass on.

V. In the fifth place, to give you FIVE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS—five subjects to teach your children—and these you will find in the verses following the text: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The first thing to teach is *morality.* "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." The second is *godliness, and a constant belief in God's oversight.* "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." The third thing is *the evil of sin:* "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." The fourth thing is, *the necessity of a broken heart:* "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." The fifth thing is *the inestimable blessedness of being a child of God:* "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken." The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."

I have given you these divisions, and now let me refer to them one by one. Here, then, is a model lesson for you: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." David commences with an interrogative: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days?" The children like that thought; they would like to live to be old. With this preface he commences and teaches them *morality:* "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." Now, we never teach morality as the way of salvation. God forbid that we should ever mix up man's works in any way with the road to heaven; for "we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." But yet we teach morality, while we teach spirituality; and I have always found that the gospel produces

the best morality in all the world. I would have the Sunday-school teacher take care of the morals of the boys and girls, speaking to them very particularly of those sins which are most common to youth. He may honestly and conveniently say many things to his children which no one else can say, especially when reminding them of the sin of lying, so common with children; the sin of little petty thefts, of disobedience to parents, of breaking the Sabbath-day. I would have the teacher be very particular in mentioning these things, one by one; for it is of little avail talking to them about sins in the mass: you must take them one by one, just as David did. First look after the tongue: "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." Then look after the whole conduct: "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." If the child's soul is not saved by other parts of the teaching, this part may have a beneficial effect upon his life; and so far so good. Morality, however, is comparatively a small thing.

The best part of what you teach is *godliness*, a constant belief in God—I said, not religion, but godliness. Many people are religious without being godly. Many have all the externals of godliness, all the outside of piety—such men we call religious—but they have no thought about God. They think about their place of worship, their Sunday, their books, but nothing about God; and he who does not respect God, pray to God, love God, is an ungodly man with all his external religion, however good that may be. Labor to teach the child always to have an eye to God; write on his brow, "Thou, God, seest me;" stamp on his books, "Thou, God, seest me;" beseech him to recollect that,

> "Within the encircling arms of God
> He ever more doth dwell;"

that the arms of Jehovah encompass him around while his every act and thought is under the eye of God. No Sunday-school teacher discharges his duty unless he constantly lays stress upon the fact that there is a God who notices every thing. O! that we were more godly ourselves, that we talked more of godliness, and that we loved it better

The third lesson is—*the evil of sin.* If the child does not learn that, he will never learn the way to heaven. None of us ever knew what a Saviour Christ was, till we knew what an evil thing sin was. If the Holy Ghost does not teach us "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," we shall never know the blessedness of salvation. Let us ask his grace, then, when we each, that we may evermore be able to lay stress upon the abominable nature of sin. "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the face of the earth." Don't spare your child; let him know what sin leads to; don't, like some people, be afraid of speaking the consequences of sin plainly and broadly. I have heard of a father, one of whose sons, a very ungodly young man, was taken off in a very sudden manner. He did not, as some would do, say to his family: "We hope your brother has gone to heaven." No; but, overcoming his natural feelings, he was enabled, by divine grace, to assemble his children, and say: "My sons and daughters, your brother is dead; I fear he is in hell; you knew his life and conduct, you saw how he behaved: God snatched him away." Then he solemnly warned them of the place to which he believed, and almost knew he was gone, begging them to shun it; and then he was the means of bringing them to serious thought. But had he acted, as some would have done, with tenderness of heart, but not with honesty of purpose, and said he hoped his son had gone to heaven, what would the others have said? "If he is gone to heaven, there is no need for us to fear, we may live as we like." No, no; I hold it is not unchristian to say of some men that they are gone to hell, when we have seen that their lives have been hellish lives. But it is said: "*Can you judge your fellow-creatures?*" No, but I can *know* them by their fruits; I do not judge them or condemn them; they judge themselves. I have seen their sins go beforehand to judgment, and I do not doubt that they shall follow after. "*But may they not be saved at the eleventh hour?*" I do not know that they may. I have heard of *one* who was, but I do not know that there ever was another, and I can not tell that there ever will be. Be honest, then, with

your children, and teach them, by the help of God, that evil shall slay the wicked.

But you will not have done half enough unless you teach carefully the fourth point—*the absolute necessity of a change of heart.* O, may God enable us to keep this constantly before the minds of the taught—that there must be a broken heart and a contrite spirit, that good works will be of no avail unless there be a new nature, that the most arduous duties, and the most earnest prayers will all be nothing, unless there be a true and thorough repentance for sin, and an entire forsaking of it through the mercy of God. Ah! be you sure, whatever you leave out, that you tell them of the three Rs, Ruin, Regeneration, and Redemption. Tell them that they are ruined by the fall, and that if they are redeemed by Christ they never can know it until they are regenerated by the Spirit. Keep before them these things; and then you will have the pleasing task of telling them.

In the fifth place, the *joy and blessedness of being a Christian.* Well, I need not tell you how to talk about that, for if you know what it is to be a Christian you will never be short of matter. Ah! beloved, when we get on this subject, our mind cares not to speak, for it would riot in its joys, and revel in its bliss. Oh! truly was it said: "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is pardoned." Truly was it said: "Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Always lay a stress upon this point, that the righteous are a blessed people—that God's chosen family, redeemed by blood and saved by power, are a blessed people here below, and will be a blessed people above. Let your children see that you are blessed. If they know you are in trouble, come with a smiling face, if it be possible, so that they may say: "Teacher is a blessed man, although he is bowed down with his troubles." Always seek to keep a joyous face that they may know religion to be a blessed thing; and let this be one main point of your teaching, though "many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken." "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate"

Thus I have given you these five lessons; and now, in conclusion, let me solemnly say, with all the instruction you may give to your children, you must all of you be deeply conscious that you are not capable of doing any thing in the child's salvation, but that it is God himself who from the first to the last must effect it all. You are a pen; God may write with you, but you can not write yourself. You are a sword; God may with you slay the child's sin, but you can not slay it yourself. Be you therefore always mindful of this, that you must be first taught of God yourself, and then you must ask God to teach, for unless a higher teacher than you instruct the child, that child must perish. It is not all your instruction can save his soul: it is the blessing of God resting on it.

May God bless your labors! He will do it if you are instant in prayer, constant in supplication; for never yet did the earnest preacher or teacher, labor in vain, and never yet has it been found that the bread cast upon the waters has been lost.

SERMON XXIII.

THE GOD OF THE AGED.

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs I will carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."—ISAIAH, xlvi. 6.

WILL you allow me to expound *the doctrine of this text*, and then to show you *how it is carried out, especially in the time of old age?*

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT I hold to be, *the constancy of God's love, its perpetuity, and its unchangeable nature.* God declares that he is not simply the God of the young saint; that he is not simply the God of the middle-aged saint; but that he is the God of the saints in all their ages from the cradle to the tomb. "Even to old age I am he;" or, as Lowth beautifully and more properly translates it, "Even to old age I am the same, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you."

The doctrine, then, is twofold: that *God himself is the same*, whatever may be our age; and that *God's dealings toward us*, both in providence and in grace, his carryings and his deliverings, *are alike unchanged.*

1. As to the first part of the doctrine, that *God himself is unchanged* when we come to old age, surely I have no need to prove that. Abundant testimonies of Scripture declare God to be an immutable being, upon whose brow there is no furrow of old age, and whose strength is not enfeebled by the lapse of ages; but if we need proofs, we might look even abroad on nature, and we should from nature guess that God would not change during the short period of our mortal life. Seemeth it unto me a hard thing, that God should be the same for seventy years, when I find things in nature that have retained the same impress and image for many more years! Behold the sun!

The sun that led our fathers to their daily labor, lighteth us still; and the moon by night is unchanged—the self-same satellite, glittering with the light of her master, the sun. Are not the rocks the same? And are there not many ancient trees, which remain well-nigh the same for multitudes of years, and outlive centuries? Is not the earth, for the most part, the same? Have the stars lost their light? Do not the clouds still pour their rain upon the earth? Does not the ocean still beat with its one great pulse of ebb and flow? Do not the winds still howl, or breathe in gentle gales upon the earth? Doth not the sun still shine? Do not plants grow as heretofore? Hath the harvest changed? Hath God forgotten his covenant of day and night? Hath he yet brought another flood upon the earth? Doth it not still stand in the water and out of the water? Surely, then, if changing nature, made to pass away in a few more years, and to be "dissolved with fervent heat," remains the same through the cycles of seventy years, may we not believe that God, who is greater than nature, the creator of all worlds, would still remain the same God, through so brief a period? Does not that suffice? Then, we have another proof. Had we a new God, we should not have the Scriptures; had God changed, then we should need a new Bible. But the Bible which the infant readeth is the Bible of the gray head; the Bible which I carried with me to my Sunday-school, I shall sit in my bed to read, when, hoary-headed, all strength shall fail save that which is divine. The promise which cheered me in the young morning of life, when first I consecrated myself to God, shall cheer me when my eyes are dim with age and when the sunlight of heaven lights them up, and I see bright visions of far-off worlds, where I hope to dwell forever. The Word of God is still the same: there is not one promise removed. The doctrines are the same; the truths are the same; all God's declarations remain unchanged forever; and I argue from the very fact that God's Book is not affected by years, that God himself must be immutable, and that his years do not change him. Look at our worship—is not that the same? O! hoary heads! well can ye remember how ye were carried to God's house in your childhood; and ye heard the self-same hymns that now ye

hear. Have they lost their savor? Have they lost their music? At times, when prayer is offered, ye remember that your ancient pastor prayed the same petition fifty years ago; but the petition is as good as ever. It is still unchanged: it is the same praise, the same prayer, the same expounding, the same preaching. All our worship is the same. And with many it is the same house of God, where first they were dedicated to God in baptism. Surely, my brethren, if God had changed, we should have been obliged to make a new form of worship; if God had not been immutable, we should have needed to have sacrificed our sacred service to some new method; but since we find ourselves bowing like our fathers, with the same prayers, and chanting the same psalms, we rightly believe that God himself must be immutable.

But we have better proofs than this that God is still unchanged. We learn this *from the sweet experience of all the saints.* They testify that the God of their youth is the God of their later years. They own that Christ "hath the dew of his youth." When they saw him first, as the bright and glorious Immanuel, they thought him "altogether lovely;" and when they see him now, they see not one beauty faded, and not one glory departed: he is the self-same Jesus. When they first rested themselves on him, they thought his shoulders strong enough to carry them; and they find these shoulders still as mighty as ever. They thought at first his bowels did melt with love, and that his heart was beating high with mercy; and they find it is still the same. God is unchanged; and therefore they "are not consumed." They put their trust in him, because they have not yet marked a single alteration in him. His character, his essence, his being, and his deeds are all the same; and, moreover, to crown all, we can not suppose a God, if we can not suppose a God immutable. A God who changed would be no God. We could not grasp the idea of deity if we once allowed our minds to take in the thought of mutability. From all these things, then, we conclude that "even from old age he is the same, and that even to hoary hairs he will carry us."

2. The other side of the doctrine is this, not only that God is *the same in his nature*, but that he is *the same in his deal*

ings; that he will carry us the same; that he will deliver us the same; that he will bear us the same as he used to do. And here, also, we need scarcely to prove to you that God's dealings toward his children are the same, especially when I remind you that God's promises are made not to ages, but to people, to persons, and to men. It has been recently declared by some ministers, that certain ages are more likely to be converted than other ages. We have heard persons state, that should a man outlive thirty years of life, if he has heard the gospel, he is not at all likely to be saved; but we believe a more palpable, bare-faced lie was never uttered in the pulpit; for we have, ourselves, known multitudes who have been saved at forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, and even bordering on the grave at eighty. We find some promises in the Bible made to some particular conditions; but the main, the great, the grand promises are made to sinners as sinners; they are made to the elect, to the chosen ones, irrespective of their age or condition. We hold, that the man who is old can be justified in the same way as the man who is young; that the robe of Christ is broad enough to cover the strong, full-grown man, as well as the little child. We believe the blood of Christ avails to wash out seventy years as well as seventy days of sin; that "with God there is no respect of persons;" that all ages are alike to him, and that "whosoever cometh unto Christ, he will in nowise cast out," and sure we are, that all the good things of the Bible are as good at one time as at another. The perfect robe of righteousness that I wear, will that change by years? The sanctification of the Spirit, will that be destroyed by years? The promises, will they shake? The covenant, will that be dissolved? I can suppose that the everlasting hills shall melt; I can dream that the eternal mountains shall be dissolved, like the snow upon their peaks; I can conceive that the ocean may be licked up with tongues of forked flame; I can suppose the sun stopped in his career; I can imagine the moon turned into blood; I can conceive the stars falling from the vault of night; I can imagine "the wreck of nature and the crash of worlds;" but I can not conceive the change of a single mercy, a single covenant blessing, a single promise, or a single grace, which God bestows upon his people; for I find every one of them in

itself stamped with immutability, and I have no reason to put this merely upon guess-work. I find, when I turn over the whole Bible, that the experience of the saints, one thousand, two thousand, three thousand years ago, was just the same as the experience of the saints now; and if I find God's mercy is unchanged from David's time till mine, can I conceive that God, who lasts the same for thousands, would change during the brief period of seventy? Nay, still we hold that he will carry us, and he will bear us in old age as well as in our youth But, besides that, we have living witnesses, living testimonies I could fetch up from the ground-floor of this place, and from the galleries, not one or two, but twenty, and a hundred living witnesses, who, rising up, would tell you that God doth carry them now as he did of old, and that he still doth bear them. I need not appeal to my friends, or they would stand up in their pews, and with the tears trickling down their cheeks, they would say, "Young men, young women, trust your God! he hath not forsaken me!" I find that,

> "Even down to old age, all his people *do* prove,
> His sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
> And when hoary hairs do their temples adorn,
> Like lambs they now still in his bosom are borne."

Ask yon aged friend, ask any aged Christian, whether he finds God has, in the least, forsaken him, and you will see him shake his head, and hear him say, "O, young man, if I had another seventy years to live, I would trust him still, for I have not found him fail all the way that the Lord God hath led me. Not one promise hath failed, but all hath come to pass;" and I think I see him lifting up his hand, in the midst of the assembly, and saying, "I have nothing to regret but my sin. If I had to lie over again, I should only want to put myself into the hands of the same Providence, to be led and directed by the self-same grace." Beloved, we need not prove to you further, for living witnesses do testify, that God carries out his promise, "I have made and will bear; even I will carry and deliver you."

II. But now we come to our real subject, which is, to consider THE TIME OF OLD AGE AS A SPECIAL PERIOD, and to mark,

therefore, the constancy of divine love—that God bears and succors his servants in their later years. I can not imagine or dream that I need offer any apology for preaching to aged people. If I were in sundry stupid circles, where people call themselves ladies and gentlemen, and always want to conceal their ages, I might have some hesitation; but I have nothing to do with that here. I call an old man an old man, and an old woman, an old woman; whether they think themselves old or not is nothing to me. I guess they are, if they are getting any way past sixty, on to seventy or eighty. Old age is *a time of peculiar memories, of peculiar hopes, of peculiar solicitudes, of peculiar blessedness, and of peculiar duties;* and yet in all this God is the same, although man be peculiar.

1. First, *old age is a time of peculiar memory;* in fact, it is the age of memory. We young men talk of remembering such and such things a certain time ago; but what is our memory compared to our fathers'? Our fathers look back on three or four times the length of time over which we cast our eyes. What a peculiar memory the old man has! How many joys he can remember! How many times has his heart beat high with rapture and blessedness! How many times has his house been gladdened with plenty! How many harvest-homes has he seen! How many treadings of the vintage! How many times has he heard the laugh run round the ingle fire! How many times have his children shouted in his ear, and rejoiced around him! How many times have his own eyes sparkled with delight! How many hill Mizars has he seen! How many times has he had sweet banqueting with the Lord! How many periods of communion with Jesus! How many hallowed services hath he attended! How many songs of Zion hath he sung! How many answered prayers have gladdened his spirit! How many happy deliverances have made him laugh for joy! When he looks back, he can string his mercies together by the thousand! and looking upon them all, he can say, though he will think of many troubles that he has had to pass through, "Surely, goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." God hath been with him to hoary hairs, and even to old age he hath carried him. His joys he looks back upon as proofs of God's constancy.

And how many griefs hath he had! How many times hath that old man been to the chamber of sickness! How many times hath that aged sister been stretched on the bed of affliction! How many diseases can he or she look back upon! How many hours of bitter travail and pain! How many seasons of trouble, infirmity, and approachings to the grave! How many times hath the old man tottered very near that bourne from which no traveler can return! How many times hath he had the Father's rod upon his shoulders! And yet, looking back upon all, he can say, "Even to old age he is the same; and even to hoary hairs he hath carried me." How frequently, too, hath that old man gone to the grave where he hath buried many he has loved! There, perhaps, he has laid a beloved wife, and he goes to weep there; or, the husband sleeps, while the wife is yet alive. Sons and daughters, too, that old man can remember—snatched away to heaven almost as soon as they were born; or, perhaps, permitted to live until their prime, and then cut down just in their youthful glory. How many of the old friends he hath welcomed to his fireside hath he buried! How frequently has he been forced to exclaim, "Though friends have departed, yet 'there is a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother;' on him I still trust, and to him I still commit my soul."

And mark, moreover, how many times temptation hath shattered that venerable saint! how many conflicts hath he had with doubts and fears! how many wrestlings with the enemy! how often he hath been tempted to forsake his faith! how frequently he hath had to stand in the thickest part of the battle; but yet he has been preserved by mercy, and not quite cut down. He has been enabled to persevere in the heavenly road. How travel-sore are his feet! how blistered by the roughness of the way; but he can tell you, that notwithstanding all these things, Christ hath "kept him till this day, and will not let him go;" and his conclusion is, "even to old age God hath been the same, and even to hoary hairs he hath carried him."

There is one sad reflection which we are obliged to mention when we look upon the bald head of the aged saint, and that is, how many sins he hath committed! Ah! my beloved,

however pure may have been your lives, you will be obliged to say, "O! how have I sinned, in youth, in middle age, and even when infirmities have gathered around me! Would to God I had been holy! How often have I forsaken God! how frequently have I wandered from him! alas! how often have I provoked him! How frequently have I doubted his promises, when I had no cause whatever to distrust him! how frequently has my tongue sinned against my heart! how constantly have I violated all I knew to be good and excellent! I am forced to say now, in my gray old age,

"'Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.'

I am still,

"'A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood.'

I have no hope now, save in the blood of Christ, and can only wonder how it is that Christ could have preserved me so long. Truly, I can say, 'Even to old age he is the same, and even to hoary hairs he hath carried me.'"

2. The aged man, too, hath *peculiar hopes*. He hath no such hopes as I or my young friends here. He hath few hopes of the future in this world; they are gathered up into a small space, and he can tell you, in a few words, what constitutes all his expectation and desire. But he has one hope, and that is the very same which he had when he first trusted in Christ; it is a hope "undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them that are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Let me talk a little of that hope, and you will see from it that the Christian is the same as ever he was; that even down to hoar hairs God deals the same with him. My venerable brother, what is *the ground* of thy hope? Is it not the same as that which animated thee when thou wast first united with the Christian church? Thou saidst then, "My hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ." I ask thee, brother, what is thy hope now, and I am sure thou wilt answer, "I do not hope to be saved because of my long service, nor because of my devotedness to God's cause.

"'All my hope on Christ is staid,
All my help from him I bring;
He covers my defenseless head
With the shadow of his wing.'"

And, my brother, what is *the reason* of thy hope? If thou art asked what reason thou hast to believe thou art a Christian, thou wilt say, "The self-same reason I gave at the church-meeting." When I came before it, I said, then "I believe myself to be a child of God, because I feel myself to be a sinner, and God has given me grace to put my trust in Jesus." I think that is all the reason you have to believe yourself a child of God now. At times you have some evidence, as you call it; but there are hours when your graces and virtues are obscured, and you can not see them, for gloomy doubts prevail, and you will confess, I am sure, that the only way to get rid of your doubts will be, to come and say, again—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ's kind arms I fall;
He's still my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour and my all."

And *the object or end* of hope, is not that the same? What was your hope when you first went to the wicket gate? Why, your hope was that you might arrive at the land of the blessed. And is it not the same now? Is your hope of heaven changed? Do you wish for any thing else, or for any thing better? "No," you will say, "I thought when I started I should one day be with Jesus; that is what I expect now. I feel that my hope is precisely the same. I want to be with Jesus, to be like him, and to see him as he is." And is not *the joy* of that hope just the same? How glad you used to be when your minister preached about heaven, and told you of its pearly gates and streets of shining gold! and has it lost any of its beauty in your eyes now? Do you not remember, that in your father's house, at family prayer, one night, they sang—

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me!
When shall my labors have an end
In joy, and peace, and thee."

Can not you sing that now? Do you want any other city beside Jerusalem? Do you remember how they used to rise up sometimes in the house of God, when you were children, and sing,

> "On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
> And cast a wishful eye?"

Will not that hymn do for you now even better than it did for you then? You can now sing it, as your old father used to sing it, with a firm heart, and yet with a quivering lip. The hopes that ravished you then ravish you now. You start at the same watchword. Heaven is your home still—

> "There your best friends, your kindred dwell,
> There God your Saviour reigns."

Does not all this prove, again, that though our hopes are somewhat more contracted than they were, yet "God is still the same, and even to hoary hairs he will carry us?"

3. Again, old age is a time of *peculiar solicitude.* An old man is not anxious about many things, as we are, for he hath not so many things for which to concern himself. He hath not the cares of starting in business, as he once had. He hath no children to launch out in business. He hath not to cast his anxious eyes on his little family. But his solicitude hath somewhat increased in another direction. He hath more solicitude about his bodily frame than he once had. He can not now run as he used to do; but he walks with more sober gait. He fears every now and then that the pitcher will "be broken at the cistern;" for "the noise of the grinders is low." He hath no longer the strength of desire he once possessed; his body begins to totter, to shake, and to quiver. The old tenement has stood these fifty years, and who expects a house to last forever? A bit of mortar has gone off from one place, and a lath out of another, and when a little wind comes to shake it about, he is ready to cry out, "The earthly house of my tabernacle is about to be dissolved." But I told you before, this peculiar solicitude is but another proof of divine faithfulness; for now that you have little pleasure in the flesh, do you not find that God is just the same? and that, though the days are

come when you can say, "I have no pleasure in *them*," yet the days are not come when you can say, "I have no pleasure in *him*;" but, on the contrary,

"Though all created streams are dried,
His wisdom is the same;
With this you still are satisfied.
And glory in his name."

If he had only been your God when you were a strong young man, you might have thought that he loved you for what you could do for him; but now you have become a poor, worn-out pensioner, have you any better proof that he is an unchanging God, because he loves you when you can do so little for him? I tell you, even your bodily pains are but proofs of his love; for he is taking down your old tenement, stick by stick, and is building it up again in brighter worlds, never to be taken down any more.

And remember, too, there is another solicitude—a failure of mind, as well as of body. There are many remarkable instances of old men, who have been as gifted in their old age as in their youth; but with the majority the mind becomes somewhat impaired, especially the memory. They can not remember what was done yesterday, although it is a singular fact that they can remember what was done fifty, sixty, or seventy years ago. They forget much which they would wish to remember; but still they find that their God is just the same: they find that his goodness does not depend on their memory; that the sweetness of his grace does not depend upon their palate. When they can remember but little of the sermon, they still feel that it leaves as good an impression on their heart as when they were strong in their memories; and thus they have another proof that God, even when their mind faileth a little, carries them down to their hoar hairs, their old age, and that to them he is ever the same.

But the chief solicitude of old age is death. Young men may die soon. Old men *must* die. Young men, if they sleep, sleep in a siege; old men, if they sleep, sleep in an attack, when the enemy has already made a breach, and is storming the castle. A gray-headed old sinner is a gray-headed old

fool; but an aged Christian is an aged wise man. But even the aged Christian hath peculiar solicitudes about death. He knows he can not be a long way from his end. He feels that, even in the course of nature, apart from what is called accidental death, there is no doubt that in a few more years he must stand before his God. He thinks he may be in heaven in ten or twenty years; but how short do those ten or twenty years appear! He does not act like a man who thinks a coach is a long way off, and he may take his time; but he is like one who is about to go a journey, and hears the post-horn blowing down the street, and is getting ready. His one solicitude now is, to examine himself whether he is in the faith. He fears that if he is wrong now, it will be terrible to have spent all his life dabbling in profession, and to find at last that he hath got nothing for his pains, except a mere empty name, which must be swept away by death. He feels now how solemn a thing the gospel is; he feels the world to be as nothing; he feels that he is near the bar of doom. But still, beloved, mark, God's faithfulness is the same; for if he be nearer death, he has the sweet satisfaction that he is nearer heaven; and if he has more need to examine himself than ever, he has also more evidence whereby to examine himself, for he can say, "Well I know that on such and such an occasion the Lord heard my prayer; at such and such a time he manifested himself unto me, as he did not unto the world;" and, though examination presses more upon the old, still they have greater materials for it. And here, again, is another proof of this grand truth. "Even unto old age I am the same," says God, "and even unto hoar hairs will I carry you."

4. And now, once more, old age hath its *peculiar blessedness*. Some time ago, I stepped up to an old man whom I saw when preaching at an anniversary, and I said to him, "Brother, do you know there is no man in the whole chapel I envy so much as you!" "Envy me," he said, "why, I am eighty-seven." I said, "I do, indeed; because you are so near your home, and because I believe that in old age there is a peculiar joy, which we young people do not taste at present. You have got to the bottom of the cup, and it is not with God's wine as it is with man's. Man's wine becomes dregs at

the last, but God's wine is sweeter the deeper you drink of it." He said, "That's very true, young man," and shook me by the hand. I believe there is a blessedness about old age that we young men know nothing of. I will tell you how that is. In the first place, the old man has a good experience to talk about. The young men are only just trying some of the promises; but the old man can turn them over one by one, and say, 'There, I have tried that, and that, and that." We read them over and say, "I *hope* they are true," but the old man says, "I *know* they are true." And then he begins to tell you why. He has got a history for every one, like a soldier for his medals; and he takes them out and says, "I will tell you when the Lord revealed that to me: just when I lost my wife; just when I buried my son; just when I was turned out of my cottage, and did not get work for six weeks; or, at another time, when I broke my leg." He begins telling you the history of the promises, and says, "There, now, I know they are all true." What a blessed thing, to look upon them as paid notes; to bring out the old checks that have been cashed, and say, "I know they are genuine, or else they would not have been paid." Old people have not the doubts young people have about the doctrines. Young people are apt to doubt; but when they get old, they begin to get solid and firm in the faith. I love to get some of my old brethren to talk with me concerning the good things of the kingdom. They do not hold the truth with their two fingers, as some of the young men do; but they get right hold of it, and nobody can take it from their grasp. Rowland Hill once somewhat lost his way in a sermon, and he turned to this text—"O Lord, my heart is fixed." "Young men," he said, "there is nothing like having your hearts fixed. I have been all these years seeking the Lord; now my heart is fixed. I never have any doubts now about election, or any other doctrine. If man brings me a new theory, I say, 'Away with it!'" I stand hard and fast by the truth alone. An old gentleman wrote me, a little time ago, and said I was a little too high. He said he believed the same doctrines as I do, but he did not think so when he was as old as I am. I told him it was just as well to begin right as to end right, and it was better to be right at

the beginning than to have to rub off so many errors afterward. An old countryman came to me, and said, "Ah! young man, you have had too deep a text; you have handled it well enough, but it is an old man's text, and I felt afraid to hear you announce it." I said, "Is God's truth dependent on age? If the thing is true, it is just as well to hear it from me as from any one else; and if you can hear it better anywhere else, you have got the opportunity." Still, he did not think that God's precious truths were suitable to young people; but I hold they are suitable to all God's children, therefore I love to preach them. But how blessed is it to come to a position in life where you have good anchorage for your faith—where you can say,

> "Should all the forms that hell devise,
> Assail my faith with treacherous art,"

I shall not be very polite to them—

> "I'll call them vanity and lies,
> And bind the gospel to my heart."

And I think there are peculiar joys which the old Christian has of another sort; and that is, he has peculiar fellowship with Christ, more than we have. At least if I understand John Bunyan rightly, I think he tells us that when we get very near to heaven there is a very glorious land. "They came into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant; the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day: wherefore this was beyond the valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting-castle. Here they were within sight of the city they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof; for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed; yea, here, 'as the bridegroom rejoiceth

over the bride, so doth their God rejoice over them.' Here they had no want of corn, and wine; for in this place they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimages. Here they heard voices from out of the city, loud voices, saying, 'Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh! Behold his reward is with him!' Here all the inhabitants of the country called them, 'the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.'" There are peculiar communings, peculiar openings of the gates of paradise, peculiar visions of glory, just as you come near to it. It stands to reason that the nearer you get to the bright light of the celestial city, the clearer shall be the air. And therefore there are peculiar blessednesses belonging to the old, for they have more of this peculiar fellowship with Christ. But all this only proves that Christ is the same; because, when there are fewer earthly joys, he gives more spiritual ones. Therefore, again, it becomes the fact—"Even to old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

5. And now, lastly, the aged saint has *peculiar duties*. There are certain things which a good man can do, which nobody else ought to do, or can do well. And that is one proof of divine faithfulness; for he says of his aged ones, "They shall bring forth fruit in old age:" and so they do. I will just tell you some of them.

Testimony is one of the peculiar duties of old men. Now, suppose I should get up, and say, "I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," some one would reply, "Why, you are not twenty-two yet; what do you know about it?" But if an old man gets up, and says, "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," with what power that testimony comes! Suppose I say to you, "Trust in God, with all thy troubles and trials, *I* can bear witness that he will not forsake you," you will reply, "O! yes, young man, but you have not had many troubles; you have not been a child of God above these six years; how should you know?" But up gets an old Christian—and well do I remember an ancient Christian rising up at the sacramental table, and saying, "Dear brethren, we are met again around this table, and I think all

an old man can do is to bear testimony to his Master. These five-and-forty years I have walked in his truth. Young people, hear what I have to say. He has been my God these five-and-forty years, and I have no fault to find with him; I have found religion's ways to be ways of pleasantness, and her paths to be paths of peace." You know, if you hear an old man talk, you pay greater attention to what he says, from the fact that he is old. I remember hearing the late Mr. Jay. I fancy that if I had heard the same sermon preached by a young man, I should not have thought so much of it; but there appeared such a depth in it, because it came from an old man, standing on the borders of the grave; it was like an echo of the past, coming to me, to let me hear my God's faithfulness, that I might trust for the future. Testimony is the duty of old men and women; they should labor whenever they can to bear testimony to God's faithfulness, and to declare that now also, when they are old and gray-headed, their God forsakes them not.

There is another duty which is peculiarly the work of the aged, and that is, the work of comforting the young believer. There is no one more qualified, that I know of, than a kind-hearted old man to convert the young. I know that down in some parts of the country there is a peculiar breed of old men, who for the good of the church I heartily hope will soon become extinct. As soon as they see a young believer, they look at him with suspicion, expecting him to be a hypocrite; they go off to his house, and find every thing satisfactory; but they say, "I was not so confident as that when I was young, young man; he must be kept back a bit." Then there are some hard questions put, and the poor young child of God gets hardly pressed, and is looked upon with suspicion, because he does not come up to their standard. But the men I allude to are such as some I have here, with whom I delight to speak, who tell you not hard things, but utter gentle words; who say, "I was imperfect when I was a young man. I know that when I was a little child I could not have answered these questions; I do not expect so much from you as from one who is a little older." And when the young Christian comes to them, they say, "Do not fear: I have gone through the waters

and they have not overflown me; and through the fire, and have not been burned. Trust in God; 'for down to old age he is the same, and to hoar hairs he will carry you.'"

Then, there is another work that is the work of the old; and that is, the work of *warning*. If an old man were to go out in the middle of the road, and shout out to you to stop, you would stop sooner than you would if a boy were to do it; for then you might say, "Out of the way, you young rascal," and go on still. The warnings of the old have great effect; and it is their peculiar work to guide the imprudent, and warn the unwary.

Now I have done, except the application. And I want to speak to three classes of persons.

What a precious thought, young men and women, is contained in this text—"That even to old age God will be the same to you: and even down to your hoar hairs he will not forsake you!" You want a safe investment; well, here is an investment safe enough. A bank may break, but heaven can not. A rock may be dissolved, and if I build a house on that it may be destroyed; but if I build on Christ, my happiness is secure forever. Young man! God's religion will last as long as you will; his comforts you will never be able to exhaust in all your life; but you will find that the bottle of your joys will be as full when you have been drinking seventy years, as it was when you first began. O! do not buy anything that will not last you: "eat ye that which is bread, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." O! how pleasant it is to be a young Christian! How blessed it is to begin in the early morning to love and serve God! The best old Christians are those who were once young Christians. Some aged Christians have but little grace, for this reason—that they were not young Christians. O! I have sometimes thought, that if there is any man who will have an abundant entrance into heaven, it is the man who in early life was brought to know the Lord. You know, going into heaven will be like the ships going into harbor. There will be some tugged in almost by miracle, "saved so as by fire;" others will be going in just with a sheet or two of canvas—they will "scarcely be saved!" but there will be some who will go in with all their canvas up,

and unto these "an abundant entrance shall be ministered into the kingdom of their God and Saviour." Young people! it is the skip that is launched early in the morning that will get an abundant entrance, and come into God's haven in full sail.

Now, you middle-aged men, you are plunged in the midst of business, and are sometimes supposing what will become of you in your old age. But is there any promise of God to you, when you suppose about to-morrow? You say, "Suppose I should live to be as old as So-and-so, and be a burden upon the people, I should not like that." Don't get meddling with God's business; leave his decrees to him. There is many a person who thought he would die in a workhouse that has died in a mansion; and many a woman that has thought she would die in the streets, has died in her bed, happy and comfortable, singing of providential grace and everlasting mercy. Middle-aged man! listen to what David says, again, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Go on, then, unsheath thy sword once more. "The battle is the Lord's;" leave thy declining years to him, and give thy present years to him. Live to him now, and he will never cast you away when you are old. Do not lay up for old age and keep back from the cause of God; but rather trust God for the future. Be "diligent in business;" but take care you do not hurt your spirit, by being too diligent, by being grasping and selfish. Remember you will

> "Want but little here below,
> Nor want that little long."

And, lastly, my dear venerable fathers in the faith, and mothers in Israel, take these words for your joy. Do not let the young people catch you indulging in melancholy, sitting in your chimney corner, grumbling and growling, but go about cheerful and happy, and they will think how blessed it is to be a Christian. If you are surly and fretful, they will think the Lord has forsaken you; but keep a smiling countenance, and they will think the promise is fulfilled. "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry

you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Do, I beseech you, my venerable friends, try to be of a happy temperament and cheerful spirit, for a child will run away from a surly old man; but there is not a child in the world but loves his grandpapa if he is cheerful and happy. You can lead us to heaven if you have got heaven's sunlight on your face; but you will not lead us at all, if you are cross and ill-tempered, for then we shall not care about your company. Make yourselves merry with the people of God, and try to live happily before men; for so will you prove to us, to a demonstration, that even to old age God is with you, and that when your strength faileth, he is still your preservation. May God Almighty bless you, for the Saviour's sake! Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

OMNISCIENCE.

"Thou God seest me."—GENESIS, xvi. 13.

THERE are more eyes fixed on man than he wots of; he sees not as he is seen. He thinks himself obscure and unobserved, but let him remember that a cloud of witnesses hold him in full survey. Wherever he is, at every instant, there are beings whose attention is riveted by his doings, and whose gaze is constantly fixed by his actions. Within this hall, I doubt not, there are myriads of spirits unseen to us—spirits good and spirits evil; upon us to-night the eyes of angels rest; attentively those perfect spirits regard our order; they hear our songs; they observe our prayers; it may be they fly to heaven to convey to their companions news of any sinners who are born of God, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we wake and when we sleep; midnight is peopled with shadows unseen, and daylight hath its spirits too. The prince of the power of the air, attended by his squadrons of evil spirits, flits through the ether oft; evil spirits watch our halting every instant, while good spirits, battling for the salvation of God's elect, keep us in all our ways and watch over our feet, lest at any time we dash them against a stone. Hosts of invisible beings attend on every one of us at different periods of our lives. We must remember, also, that not only do the spirits of angels, elect or fallen, look on us, but "the spirits of the just made perfect" continually observe our conversation. We are taught by the apostle that the noble army of martyrs, and the glorious company of confessors, are "witnesses" of our race to heaven, for he

says, "Seeing, then, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." From yon blue heaven the eyes of the glorified look down on us; there the children of God are sitting on their starry thrones, observing whether we manfully uphold the banner around which they fought; they behold our valor, or they detect our cowardice; and they are intent to witness our valiant deeds of noble daring, or our ignominious retreat in the day of battle.

Remember that, ye sons of men, you are not unregarded; you do not pass through the world in unseen obscurity. In darkest shades of night eyes glare on you through the gloom. In the brightness of the day angels are spectators of your labors. From heaven there look down upon you spirits who see all that finite beings are capable of beholding. But if we think that thought worth treasuring up, there is one which sums up that and drowns it, even as a drop is lost in the ocean; it is the thought, "Thou GOD seest me." It is naught that angels see me, it is naught that devils watch me, it is naught that the glorified spirits observe me, compared with the overwhelming truth, that thou God at all times seest me. Let us dwell on that now, and may God the Spirit make use of it to our spiritual profit!

In the first place, I shall notice *the general doctrine*, that God observes all men. In the second place, I shall notice *the particular doctrine*, "Thou God seest *me*." And in the third place, I shall *draw from it some practical and comforting inferences* to different orders of persons now assembled, each of whom may learn something from this short sentence.

I. In the first place, THE GENERAL DOCTRINE, that God sees us.

1. This may be easily proved, even from the nature of God. It were hard to suppose a God who could not see his own creatures; it were difficult in the extreme to imagine a divinity who could not behold the actions of the works of his hands. The word which the Greeks applied to God implied that he was a God who could see. They called him Θεος (*Theos*); and they derived that word, if I read rightly, from the root θειϲθαι (*theisthai*), to see, because they regarded God as being the

all-seeing one, whose eye took in the whole universe at a glance, and whose knowledge extended far beyond that of mortals. God Almighty, from his very essence and nature, must be an omniscient God. Strike out the thought that he sees me, and you extinguish deity by a single stroke. There were no God if that God had no eyes, for a blind God were no God at all. We could not conceive such a one. Stupid as idolaters may be, it were very hard to think that even they had fashioned a blind god: even they have given eyes to their gods, though they see not. Juggernaut has eyes stained with blood; and the gods of the ancient Romans had eyes, and some of them were called far-seeing gods. Even the heathen can scarce conceive of a God that hath no eyes to see, and certainly we are not so mad as to imagine for a single second that there can be a deity without the knowledge of every thing that is done by man beneath the sun. I say it were as impossible to conceive of a God who did not observe every thing as to conceive of a round square. When we say, "*Thou God*," we do, in fact, comprise in the word "God" the idea of a God who sees every thing, "Thou God seest me:"

2. Yet, further, we are sure that God must see us, for we are taught in the Scriptures that *God is everywhere;* and if God be everywhere, what doth hinder him from seeing all that is done in every part of his universe? God is here: I do not simply live near him, but "*in* him I live, and move, and have my being." There is not a particle of this mighty space which is not filled with God: go forth into the pure air, and there is not a particle of it where God is not. In every portion of this earth whereon I tread, and the spot whereon I move there is God.

> "Within thy circling power I stand;
> On every side I find thy hand:
> Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
> I am surrounded still with God."

Take the wings of the morning and fly beyond the most distant star, but God is there. God is not a being confined to one place, but he is everywhere: he is there, and there, and there; in the deepest mine ever bored; in the unfathomable caverns of the ocean; in the heights, towering and lofty; in

the gulfs that are deep, which fathom can never reach; God is everywhere. I know from his own words that he is a God who filleth immensity: the heavens are not wide enough for him; he graspeth the sun with one hand and the moon with the other; he stretcheth himself through the unnavigated ether; where the wing of the seraph hath never been flapped, there is God; and where the solemnity of silence has never been broken by the song of the cherub, there is God; God is everywhere. Conceive space, and God and space are equal. Well, then, if God be everywhere, how can I refrain from believing that God sees me wherever I am? He does not look upon me from a distance: if he did, I might screen myself beneath the shades of night; but he is here, close by my side, and not *by* me only, but *in* me; within this heart; where these lungs beat; or where my blood gushes through my veins; or where this pulse is beating, like a muffled drum, my march to death; God is there: within this mouth; in this tongue; in these eyes; in each of you God dwells; he is within you, and around you; he is beside you, and behind, and before. Is not such knowledge too wonderful for you? Is it not high, and you can not attain unto it? I say, how can you resist the doctrine, which comes upon you like a flash of lightning, that if God be everywhere he must see every thing, and that therefore it is a truth "Thou God seest me."

3. But lest any should suppose that God may be in a place, and yet slumbering, let me remind him that in every spot to which he can travel there is, not simply God, but also *God's activity*. Wherever I go I shall find, not a slumbering God, but a God busy about the affairs of this world. Take me to the green sward, and pleasant pasture—why, every little blade of grass there has God's hand in it, making it grow; and every tiny daisy, which a child likes to pluck, looks up with its little eye, and says, "God is in me, circulating my sap, and opening my little flower." Go where you will through this London, where vegetation is scarcely to be found; look up yonder and see those rolling stars; God is active there: it is his hand that wheels along the stars, and moves the moon in her nightly course. But if there be neither stars nor moon, there are those clouds, heavy with darkness, like the cars of night; who

steers them across the sea of azure? Doth not the breath of God blowing upon them drive them along the heavens? God is everywhere, not as a slumbering God, but as an active God. I am upon the sea; and there I see God making the everlasting pulse of nature beat in constant ebbs and flows. I am in the pathless desert, but above me screams the vulture, and I see God winging the wild bird's flight. I am shut up in a hermitage; but an insect drops from its leaf, and I see, in that insect, life which God preserves and sustains: yea, shut me out from the animate creation, and put me on the barren rock, where moss itself can not find a footing; and I shall there discern my God bearing up the pillars of the universe, and sustaining that bare rock as a part of the Colossal foundation whereon he hath built the world.

"Where'er we turn our gazing eyes,
Thy radiant footsteps shine;
Ten thousand pleasing wonders rise
And speak their source divine.

"The living tribes of countless forms,
In earth, and sea, and air,
The meanest flies, the smallest worms,
Almighty power declare."

Ye shall see God everywhere: if ye see him not around you, look within you; and is he not there? Is not your blood now flowing through every portion of your body, to and from your heart? And is not God there active? Do you not know that every pulse you beat needs a volition of deity as its permit; and yet more, needs an exertion of divine power as its cause? Do you not know that every breath you breathe needs deity for its inspiration and expiration, and that you must die if God withdraw that power? If we could look within us, there are mighty works going on in this mortal fabric—the garment of the soul—which would astonish you, and make you see, indeed, that God is not asleep, but that he is active and busy. There is a working God everywhere, a God with his eyes open everywhere, a God with his hands at work everywhere; a God doing something, not a God slumbering, but a God laboring. O! sirs, does not the conviction flash

upon your mind with a brightness, against which you can not shut your eyes, that, since God is everywhere, and everywhere active, it follows, as a necessary and unavoidable consequence that he must see us, and know all our actions and our deeds?

4. I have one more proof to offer which I think to be conclusive. God, we may be sure, sees us, when we remember that *he can see a thing before it happens.* If he beholds an event before it transpires, surely, reason dictates, he must see a thing that is happening now. Read those ancient prophecies, read what God said should be the end of Babylon and Nineveh; just turn to the chapter where you read of Edom's doom, or where you are told that Tyre shall be desolate; then walk through the lands of the East and see Nineveh and Babylon cast to the ground, the cities ruined; and then reply to this question—"Is not God a God of foreknowledge? Can he not see the things that are to come?" Ay, there is not a thing which shall transpire in the next cycle of a thousand years which is not already past to the infinite mind of God; there is not a deed which shall be transacted to-morrow, or the next day, or the next, through eternity, if days can be eternal, but God knoweth it altogether. And if he knows the future, does he not know the present? If his eyes look through the dim haze which vails us from the things of futurity, can he not see that which is standing in the brightness of the present? If he can see a great distance, can he not see near at hand? Surely that divine Being who discerneth the end from the beginning, must know the things which occur now; and it must be true that "thou God seest us," even the whole of us, the entire race of man. So much for the general and universally acknowledged doctrine.

II. Now, I come, in the second place, to the SPECIAL DOCTRINE: "Thou God seest *me.*"

Come, now, there is a disadvantage in having so many hearers, as there is always in speaking to more than one at a time, because persons are apt to think, "He does not speak to me." Jesus Christ preached a very successful sermon once when he had but one hearer, because he had the woman sitting on the well, and she could not say that Christ was preach-

ing to her neighbor. He said to her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." There was something there which smote her heart; she could not evade the confession of her guilt. But in regard to our congregations, the old orator might soon see his prayer answered, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears," for when the gospel is preached, we lend our ears to every body; we are accustomed to hear for our neighbors, and not for ourselves. Now, I have no objection to you lending any thing else you like, but I have a strong objection to you lending your ears; I shall be glad if you will keep them at home for a minute or two, for I want to make you hear for yourselves this truth, "Thou God seest *me*."

Mark, God sees *you*—selecting any one out of this congregation—he sees you, he sees you *as much as if there were no body else in the world for him to look at.* If *I* have as many people as there are here to look at, of course my attention must be divided; but the infinite mind of God is able to grasp a million objects at once, and yet to set itself as much upon one, as if there were nothing else but that one; so that you, to-night, are looked at by God as much as if, throughout space, there were not another creature but yourself. Can you conceive that? Suppose the stars blotted out in darkness, suppose the angels dead; imagine the glorified spirits above are all gone, and you are left alone, the last man, and there is God looking at you. What an idea it would be for you to think of—that there was only you to be looked at! how steadily he could observe you! how well he would discern you! But mark you, God does really look at you this night as much, as entirely, as absolutely without division of sight, as if you were the only being his hands had ever made. Can you grasp that? God sees you, with all his eyes, with the whole of his sight—you—you—you—you are the particular object of his attention at this very moment. God's eyes are looking down upon you; remember that!

In the next place, God sees you *entirely*. He does not merely note your actions; he does not simply notice what is the appearance of your countenance; he does not merely take into his eyesight what your posture may be; but remember, God sees what you are thinking of; he looks within. God has a

window in every man's heart, through which he looks; he does not want you to tell him what you are thinking about—he can see that, he can read right through you. Do you not know that God can read what is written on the rocks at the bottom of the ocean, even though ten thousand fathoms of dark water roll above? And I tell you he can read every word that is in your breast; he knows every thought, every imagination, every conception, yea, every unformed imagination, the thought scarce shot from the bow, reserved in the quiver of the mind he sees it all, every particle, every atom of it.

"My thoughts, scarce struggling into birth,
Great God! are known to thee:
Abroad, at home, still I'm inclosed
With thine immensity.

"Behind I glance, and thou art there:
Before me, shines thy name;
And 'tis thy strong Almighty hand,
Sustains my tender frame."

Can you appropriate that thought? From the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, God is examining you now; his scalpel is in your heart, his lancet in your breast; he is searching your heart and trying your reins; he knows you behind and before. "Thou God seest me;" thou seest me entirely.

Note again, God sees you *constantly*. You are sometimes watched by man, and then your conversation is tolerably correct; at other times you seek retirement, and you indulge yourselves in things which you would not dare to do before the gaze of your fellow-creatures. But recollect, wherever you are, God sees you: you may lay yourselves down by the side of the hidden brook where the willows shelter you, where all is still, without sound—God is there looking at you! You may retire to your chamber, and draw the curtains of your couch, and throw yourselves down for repose in midnight's gloomiest shade; God sees you there! I remember going into a castle sometime ago, down many a winding stair, round and round, and round and round, where light never penetrated; at last I came to a space, very narrow, about the length of a man. "There," said the keeper, "such-and-such

a one was shut up for so many years, a ray of light never having penetrated; sometimes they tortured him, but his shrieks never reached through the thickness of these walls, and never ascended that winding staircase; here he died, and there, sir, he was buried," pointing to the ground, But though that man had none on earth to see him, God saw him. Yea, you may shut me up forever, where ear shall never hear my prayer, where eye shall never see my misery; but one eye shall look upon me, and one countenance smile on me, if I suffer for righteousness' sake. If for Christ's sake I am in prison, one hand shall be upon me, and one voice shall say, "Fear not; I will help thee." At all times, in all places, in all your thoughts, in all your acts, in all your privacy, in all your public doings, at every season, this is true: "Thou God seest me."

Yet once more: "Thou God seest me," *supremely.* I can see myself, but not as well as either my friends or foes. Men can see me better than I can see myself; but man can not see me as God sees me. A man skilled in the human heart might interpret my deeds, and translate their motives, but he could not read my heart as God can read it. None can tell another as God can tell us all: we do not know ourselves as God knows us: with all your self-knowledge, with all you have been told by others, God knows you more fully than you know yourself: no eye can see you as God sees you; you may act in daylight; you may not be ashamed of your actions, you may stand up before men and say, "I am a public man, I wish to be observed and noticed;" you may have all your deeds chronicled, and all men may hear of them, but I wot men will never know you as God will know you; and if you could be chained, as Paul was, with a soldier at your arm; if he were with you night and day, sleeping with you, rising with you; if he could hear all your thoughts, he could not know you as God knows you; for God sees you superlatively and supremely.

Let me now apply that to you: "Thou God seest *me.*" This is true of each of you; try and think of it for a moment. Even as my eye rests on *you*, so, in a far, far greater sense does God's eye rest on *you:* standing, sitting, wherever you are, this is true, "Thou God seest *me.*" It is said that when

you heard Rowland Hill, if you were stuck in a window, or further away at the door, you always had the conviction that he was preaching at you. O! I wish I could preach like that; if I could make you feel that I was preaching at you in particular; that I singled you out, and shot every word at you, then I should hope for some effect. Try and think, then, "thou God seest me."

III. Now I come to DIFFERENT INFERENCES for different persons, to serve different purposes.

First, to the *prayerful.* Prayerful man, prayerful woman, here is consolation—God sees you: and if he can see you, surely he can hear you. Why, we can often hear people when we can not see them. If God is so near to us, and if his voice is like the thunder, sure his ears are as good as his eyes, and he will be sure to answer us. Perhaps you can not say a word when you pray. Never mind; God does not want to hear; he can tell what you mean even by seeing you. "There," says the Lord, "is a child of mine in prayer. He says not a word; but do you see that tear rolling down his cheek? Do you hear that sigh?" O, mighty God, thou canst see both tear and sigh! thou canst read desire when desire hath not clothed itself in words. The naked wish God can interpret; he needs us not to light the candle of our desires with language; he can see the candle ere it is lit.

> "He knows the words we mean to speak,
> When from our lips they can not break,"

by reason of the anguish of our spirit. He knows the desire, when words stagger under the weight of it; he knows the wish when language fails to express it. "Thou God seest me." Ah, God, when I can not pray with words, I will throw myself flat on my face, and I will groan my prayer; and if I can not groan it, I will sigh it; and if I can not sigh it, I will wish it; and when these eye-strings break, and when death has sealed these lips, I will enter heaven with a prayer, which thou wilt not hear, but which thou wilt see—the prayer of my inmost spirit, when my heart and my flesh fail me, that God may be the strength of my life and portion forever. There is

comfort for you, you praying ones, that God sees you. That is enough: if you can not speak, he can see you.

I have given a word for the prayerful; now a word for the *careful.* Some here are very full of care, and doubt, and anxieties, and fears. "O, sir!" you say, "if you could come to my poor house, you would not wonder that I should feel anxious. I have had to part with much of my little furniture to provide myself with a living; I am brought very low; I have not a friend in London; I am alone, alone in the wide world." Soft! stop, sir! you are not alone in the world; there is at least one eye regarding you; there is one hand that is ready to relieve you. Don't give up in despair. If your case is ever so bad, God can see your care, your troubles, and your anxieties. To a good man, it is enough to *see* destitution to relieve it; and for God, it is enough to see the distress of his family at once to supply their wants. If you were lying wounded on the battle-field; if you could not speak, you know right well your comrades who are coming by with an ambulance will pick you up, if they do but see you; and that is enough for you. So if you are lying on the battle-field of life, God sees you; let that cheer you: he will relieve you; for he only needs to look at the woes of his children at once to relieve them. Go on then; hope yet; in night's darkest hour, hope for a brighter morrow. God sees thee, whatever thou art doing.

> "He knows thy cares, thy tears, thy sighs;
> He shall lift up thy head."

And now a word to the *slandered.* There are some of us who come in for a very large share of slander. It is very seldom that the slander-market is much below par; it usually runs up at a very mighty rate; and there are persons who will take shares to any amount. If men could dispose of railway stock as they can of slander, those who happen to have any scrip here would be rich enough by to-morrow at twelve o'clock. There are some who have a superabundance of that matter; they are continually hearing rumors of this, that, and the other; and there is one fool or another who has not brains enough to write sense, nor honesty sufficient to keep him to the truth; who, therefore, writes the most infa-

mous libels upon some of God's servants, compared with whom, he himself is nothing, and whom for very envy he chooses to depreciate. Well, what matters it? Suppose you are slandered; here is your comfort: "Thou *God* seest me." They say that such-and-such is your motive, but you need not answer them; you can say, "God knows that matter." You are charged with such-and-such a thing, of which you are innocent; your heart is right concerning the deed, you have never done it: well, you have no need to battle for your reputation; you need only point your finger to the sky, and say, "There is a witness there who will right me at last—there is a Judge of all the earth, whose decision I am content to wait; his answer will be a complete exoneration of me, and I shall come out of the furnace like gold seven times purified." Young men, are you striving to do good, and do others impute wrong motives to you? Do not be particular about answering them: just go straight on, and your life will be the best refutation of the calumny. David's brethren said that, in his pride and the naughtiness of his heart, he had come to see the battle. "Ah!" thought David, "I will answer you by-and-by." Off he went across the plain to fight Goliah; he cut off his head, and then came back to his brethren with a glorious answer in his conquering hand. If any man desire to reply to the false assertions of his enemies, let him go and do good, he need not say a word—that will be his answer. I am the subject of detraction, but I can point to hundreds of souls that have been saved on earth by my feeble instrumentality, and my reply to all my enemies is this, "You may say what you like; but seeing these lame men are healed, can you say any thing against them? You may find fault with the style or manner, but God saves souls, and we will hold up that fact, like giant Goliah's head, to show you that although it was nothing but a sling or a stone, so much the better, for "God has gotten the victory." Go straight on, and you will live down your slanderers; and remember when you are most distressed, "Thou God seest me."

Now, *a sentence or two to some of you who are ungodly* and know not Christ. What shall I say to you but this—how heinous are your sins when they are put in the light of

this doctrine! Remember, sinner, whenever thou sinnest, thou sinnest in the teeth of God. It is bad enough to steal in darkness, but he is a very thief who steals in daylight. It is vile, it is fearfully vile, to commit a sin which I desire to cover, but to do my sin when man is looking at me shows much hardness of heart. Ah! sinner, remember, thou sinnest with God's eye looking on thee. How black must be thy heart! how awful thy sin! for thou sinnest in the very face of justice when God's eye is fixed on thee. I was looking the other day at a glass bee-hive, and it was very singular to observe the motions of the little creatures inside. Well, now, this world is nothing but a huge glass bee-hive. God looks down on you, and he sees you all. You go into your little cells in the streets of this huge city; you go to your business, your pleasures, your devotions, and your sins; but remember, wherever you go, you are like the bees under a great glass shade, you can never get away from God's observation. When children disobey before the eyes of their parents, it shows that they are hardened. If they do it behind their parents' back, it proves that there is some shame left. But you, sirs, sin when God is present with you; you sin while God's eyes are searching you through and through. Even now you are thinking hard thoughts of God, while God is hearing all those silent utterances of your evil hearts. Does not that render your sin extremely heinous? Therefore, I beseech you, think of it, and repent of your wickedness, and your sins may be blotted out through Jesus Christ.

And one more thought. If God sees thee, O sinner, *how easy it will be to condemn thee.* In the late horrible case of Palmer, witnesses were required, and a jury were impanneled to try the accused. But if the judge could have mounted the bench, and have said, "I saw the man, myself, mix the poison; I stood by and saw him administer it; I read his thoughts; I knew for what purpose he did it; I read his heart; I was with him when he first conceived the black design, and I have tracked him in all his evasions, in all those acts by which he sought to blindfold justice; and I can read in his heart that he knows himself to be guilty now." The case then would have been over; the trial would have been

little more than a form. What wilt thou think, O sinner, when thou art brought before God, and God shall say, "Thou didst so-and-so," and will mention what you did in the darkness of the night, when no eye was there? You will start back and say, "O heavens! how shall God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" He will say, "Stop, sinner; I have more to startle thee yet;" and he will begin to unfold the records of the past: leaf after leaf he will read of the diary he has kept of your existence. O! I can see you as he reads page after page; your knees are knocking together your hair is standing on end, your blood is frozen in your veins, congealed for fright, and you stand like a second Niobe, a rock bedewed with tears. You are thunder-struck to find your thoughts read out before the sun, while men and angels hear. You are amazed beyond degree to hear your imaginations read, to see your deeds photographed on the great white throne, and to hear a voice saying, "Rebellion at such a time; uncleanness at such a time; evil thoughts at such an hour; Sabbath-breaking on such a day; blasphemy at such a time; theft at such an hour; hard thoughts of God at such a period; rejection of his grace on such a day; stiflings of conscience at another time;" and so on to the end of the chapter, and then the awful final doom. "Sinner, depart accursed! I saw the sin; it needs no witnesses; I heard thy oath; I heard thy blasphemy; I saw thy theft; I read thy thought. Depart! depart! I am clear when I judge thee; I am justified when I condemn thee: for thou hast done this evil in my sight."

Lastly, you ask me what you must do to be saved; and I will never let a congregation go, I hope, till I have told them that. Hear, then, in a few words, the way of salvation. It is this. Christ said to the apostles, "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Or, to give you Paul's version when he spoke to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Thou askest what thou art to believe. Why, this: that Christ died and rose again; that by his death he did bear the punishment of all believers; and that by his resurrection he did wipe out

the faults of all his children. And if God give thee faith, thou wilt believe that Christ died for thee; and wilt be washed in his blood, and thou wilt trust his mercy and his love to be thine everlasting redemption when this world shall end.

SERMON XXV.

CHRIST IN THE COVENANT.

"I will give thee for a covenant of the people."—Isaiah, xlix. 8.

We all believe that our Saviour has very much to do with the covenant of eternal salvation. We have been accustomed to regard him as the mediator of the covenant, as the surety of the covenant, and as the scope or substance of the covenant. We have considered him to be the *Mediator* of the covenant, for we were certain that God could make no covenant with man unless there were a mediator—a days-man, who could stand between them both. And we have hailed him as the Mediator, who, with mercy in his hands, came down to tell to sinful man the news that grace was promised in the eternal counsel of the Most High. We have also loved our Saviour as the *Surety* of the covenant, who, on our behalf, undertook to pay our debts; and on his Father's behalf undertook, also, to see that all our souls should be secure and safe, and ultimately presented unblemished and complete before him. And I doubt not, we have also rejoiced in the thought that Christ is the *sum and substance* of the covenant; we believe that if we would sum up all the spiritual blessings, we must say, "Christ is all." He is the matter, he is the substance of it; and although much might be said concerning the glories of the covenant, yet nothing could be said which is not to be found in that one word, "Christ." But this morning I shall dwell on Christ, not as the Mediator, nor as the surety, nor as the scope of the covenant, but as one great and glorious article of the covenant which God has given to his children. It is our firm belief that Christ is ours, and is given to us of God; we know that "he freely delivered him up for us all," and we, therefore,

believe that he will, "with him, freely give us all things." We can say, with the spouse, "My beloved is mine." We feel that we have a personal property in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and it will therefore delight us for a while, this morning, in the simplest manner possible, without garnishing of eloquence or the trappings of oratory, just to meditate upon this great thought, that Jesus Christ is the covenant, is the property of every believer.

First, we shall *examine this property;* secondly, we shall notice the *purpose for which it was conveyed to us;* and thirdly, we shall give *one precept*, which may well be affixed upon so great a blessing as this, and is indeed an inference from it.

I. In the first place, then, here is a GREAT POSSESSION—Jesus Christ by the covenant is the property of every believer. By this we must understand Jesus Christ in many different senses; and we will begin, first of all, by declaring that Jesus Christ is ours, *in all his attributes.* He has a double set of attributes, seeing that there are two natures joined in glorious union in one person. He has the attributes of very God, and he has the attributes of perfect man; and whatever these may be, they are each one of them the perpetual property of every believing child of God. I need not dwell on his attributes as God; you all know how infinite is his love, how vast his grace, how firm his faithfulness, how unswerving his veracity; you know that he is omniscient; you know that he is omnipresent; you know that he is omnipotent; and it will console you if you will but think that all these great and glorious attributes which belong to God are all yours. Has he power? That power is yours—yours to support and strengthen you; yours to overcome your enemies, yours to keep you immutably secure. Has he love? Well there is not a particle of his love in his great heart which is not yours; all his love belongs to you; you may dive into the immense, bottomless ocean of his love, and you may say of it all, "it is mine." Hath he justice? It may seem a stern attribute; but even that is yours, for he will by his justice see to it, that all which is covenanted to you by the oath and promise of God shall be most certainly secured to you. Mention whatever you please which is characteristic

of Christ as the ever-glorious Son of God, and, O faithful one, thou mayest put thine hand upon it and say, "it is mine." Thine arm, O Jesus, on which the pillars of the earth do hang, is mine. Those eyes, O Jesus, which pierce through the thick darkness and behold obscurity—thine eyes are mine, to look on me with love. Those lips, O Christ, which sometimes speak words louder than ten thousand thunders, or whisper syllables sweeter than the music of the harps of the glorified —those lips are mine. And that great heart which beateth high with such disinterested, pure, and unaffected love—that heart is mine. The whole of Christ, in all his glorious nature as the Son of God, as God over all, blessed forever, is yours positively, actually, without metaphor, in reality yours.

Consider him as man too. All that he has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man he stood before his Father, "full of grace and truth," full of favor; and accepted by God as a perfect being. O believer, God's acceptance of Christ is thine acceptance; for knowest thou not, that that love which the Father set on a perfect Christ, he sets on thee now? For all that Christ did is thine. That perfect righteousness which Jesus wrought out, when through his stainless life he kept the law and made it honorable, is thine. There is not a virtue which Christ ever had, that is not thine; there is not a holy deed which he ever did which is not thine; there is not a prayer he ever sent to heaven that is not thine; there is not one solitary thought toward God which it was his duty to think, and which he thought as man serving his God, which is not thine. All his righteousness, in its vast extent, and in all the perfection of his character, is imputed to thee. O! canst thou think what thou hast gotten in the word "Christ?" Come, believer, consider that word "God," and think how mighty it is; and then meditate upon that word "perfect man," for all that the man-God, Christ, and the glorious God-man, Christ, ever had, or ever can have as the characteristic of either of his natures, all that is thine. It all belongs to thee; it is out of pure free favor, beyond the fear of revocation, passed over to thee to be thine actual property—and that forever.

2. Then, consider believer, that not only is Christ thine in

all his attributes, but he is thine *in all his offices.* Great and glorious these offices are; we have scarce time to mention them all. Is he a prophet? Then he is *thy* prophet. Is he a priest? Then he is *thy* priest. Is he a king? Then he is *thy* king. Is he a redeemer? Then he is *thy* redeemer. Is he an advocate? Then he is *thy* advocate. Is he a forerunner? Then he is *thy* forerunner. Is he a surety of the covenant? Then he is *thy* surety. In every name he bears, in every crown he wears, in every vestment in which he is arrayed, he is the believer's own. O! child of God, if thou hadst grace to gather up this thought into thy soul it would comfort thee marvelously, to think that in all Christ is in office, he is most assuredly thine. Dost thou see him yonder, interceding before his Father, with outstretched arms? Dost thou mark his ephod—his golden miter upon his brow, inscribed with "holiness unto the Lord?" Dost see him as he lifts up his hands to pray? Hearest thou not the marvelous intercession, such as man never prayed on earth; that authoritative intercession such as he himself could not use in the agonies of the garden? For

> "With sighs and groans, he offered up
> His humble suit below;
> *But with authority he pleads,*
> *Enthroned in glory now.*"

Dost see how he asks, and how he receives, as soon as his petition is put up? And canst thou, darest thou believe that that intercession is all thine own, that on his breast thy name is written, that in his heart thy name is stamped in marks of indelible grace, and that all the majesty of that marvelous, that surpassing intercession is thine own, and would all be expended for thee if thou didst require it; that he has not any authority with his Father, that he will not use on thy behalf, if thou dost need it; that he has no power to intercede that he would not employ for thee in all times of necessity? Come now, words can not set this forth; it is only your thoughts that can teach you this; it is only God the Holy Spirit bringing home the truth that can set this ravishing, this transporting thought in its proper position in your heart; that Christ is yours in all

he is and has. Seest thou him on earth? There he stands, the priest offering his bloody sacrifice; see him on the tree, his hands are pierced, his feet are gushing gore! O! dost thou see that pallid countenance, and those languid eyes flowing with compassion? Dost thou mark that crown of thorns? Dost thou behold that mightiest of sacrifices, the sum and substance of them all? Believer, that is *thine*, those precious drops plead and claim *thy* peace with God; that open side is *thy* refuge, those pierced hands are thy redemption; that groan he groans for thee; that cry of a forsaken heart he utters for thee; that death he dies for thee. Come, I beseech thee, consider Christ in any one of his various offices; but when thou dost consider him, lay hold of this thought, that in all these things he is THY Christ, given unto thee to be one article in the eternal covenant—thy possession forever.

3. Then mark next, Christ is the believer's in every one of *his works*. Whether they be works of suffering or of duty, they are the property of the believer. As a child, he was circumcised, and is that bloody rite mine? Ay, "Circumcised in Christ." As a believer he is buried, and is that watery sign of baptism mine? Yes; "Buried with Christ in baptism unto death." Jesus' baptism I share when I lie interred with my best friend in the selfsame watery tomb. See there, he dies, and it is a master-work to die. But is his death mine? Yes, I die in Christ. He is buried, and is that burial mine? Yes, I am buried with Christ. He rises. Mark him startling his guards, and rising from the tomb! And is that resurrection mine? Yes, we are "risen together in Christ." Mark again, he ascends up on high, and leads captivity captive. Is that ascension mine? Yes, for he hath "raised us up together." And see, he sits on his Father's throne: is that deed mine? Yes, he hath made us "sit together in heavenly places." All he did is ours. By divine decree, there existed such a union between Christ and his people, that all Christ did his people did; and all Christ has performed, his people did perform in him, for they were in his loins when he descended to the tomb, and in his loins they have ascended up on high; with him they entered into bliss; and with him they sit in heavenly places. Represented by him, their head, all his

people even now are glorified in him—even in him who is the head over all things to his church. In all the deeds of Christ, either in his humiliation or his exaltation, recollect, O believer, thou hast a covenant interest, and all those things are thine.

4. I would for one moment hint at a sweet thought, which is this: you know that in the person of Christ "dwelleth *all the fullness of the Godhead* bodily." Ah! believer, "and of his fullness have we received, and grace for grace." *All the fullness of Christ*, and do you know what that is? Do you understand that phrase? I warrant you, you do not know it, and shall not just yet. But all that fullness of Christ, the abundance of which you may guess of by your own emptiness—all that fullness is thine to supply thy multiplied necessities. All the fullness of Christ to restrain thee, to keep thee and preserve thee; all that fullness of power, of love, of purity, which is stored up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is thine. Do treasure up that thought, for then thy emptiness need never be a cause of fear: how canst thou be lost whilst thou hast all fullness to fly to?

5. But I come to something sweeter than this: *the very life of Christ* is the property of the believer. Ah! this is a thought into which I can not dive, and I feel I have outdone myself in only mentioning it. The life of Christ is the property of every believer. Canst thou conceive what Christ's life is? "Sure," you say, "he poured it out upon the tree." He did, and it was his life that he gave to thee then. But he took that life again; even the life of his body was restored; and the life of his great and glorious Godhead had never undergone any change, even at that time. But now, you know, he has immortality: "he only hath immortality." Can you conceive what kind of life that is which Christ possesses? Can he ever die? No; far sooner may the harps of heaven be stopped, and the chorus of the redeemed cease forever far sooner may the glorious walls of paradise be shaken, and the foundations thereof be removed, than that Christ, the Son of God, should ever die. Immortal as his Father, now he sits, the great eternal One. Christian, that life of Christ is thine. Hear what he says: "Because I live ye shall live also."

"Ye are dead; and your life"—where is it? It is "hid with Christ in God." The same blow which smites us dead, spiritually, must slay Christ too; the same sword which can take away the spiritual life of a regenerate man, must take away the life of the Redeemer also; for they are linked together—they are not two lives, but one. We are but the rays of that great Sun of Righteousness, our Redeemer—sparks which must return to the great orb again. If we are indeed the true heirs of heaven, we can not die until he from whom we take our rise dieth also. We are the stream that can not stop till the fountain be dry; we are the rays that can not cease until the sun doth cease to shine. We are the branches, and we can not wither until the trunk itself shall die. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The very life of Christ is the property of every one of his brethren.

6. And best of all, *the person of Jesus Christ* is the property of the Christian. I am persuaded, beloved, we think a great deal more of God's gifts than we do of God; and we preach a great deal more about the Holy Spirit's influence than we do about the Holy Spirit. And I am also assured that we talk a great deal more about the offices, and works, and attributes of Christ than we do about the person of Christ. Hence it is that there are few of us who can often understand the figures that are used in Solomon's Song, concerning the person of Christ, because we have seldom sought to see him or desired to know him. But, O believer, thou hast sometimes been able to behold thy Lord. Hast thou not seen *him*, who is white and ruddy, "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely?" Hast thou not been sometimes lost in pleasure when thou hast seen his feet, which are like much fine gold, as if they burned in a furnace? Hast thou not beheld him in the double character, the white and the red, the lily and the rose the God yet the man, the dying yet the living; the perfect, and yet bearing about with him a body of death? Hast thou ever beheld that Lord with the nail-prints in his hands, and the mark still on his side? And hast thou ever been ravished at his loving smile, and been delighted at his voice? Hast thou never had love visits from him? Has he never put his banner over thee? Hast thou never walked

with him to the villages and the garden of nuts? Hast thou never sat under his shadow? Hast thou never found his fruit sweet unto thy taste? Yes, thou hast. His *person* then is thine. The wife loveth her husband; she loveth his house and his property; she loveth him for all that he giveth her, for all the bounty he confers, and all the love he bestows; but his person is the object of her affections. So with the believer: he blesses Christ for all he does and all he is. But O! it is Christ that is every thing. He does not care so much about his office, as he does about *the Man* Christ. See the child on his father's knee—the father is a professor in the university; he is a great man with many titles, and perhaps the child knows that these are honorable titles, and esteems him for them; but he does not care so much about the professor and dignity, as about the person of his father. It is not the college square cap, or the gown, that the child loves, ay, and if it be a loving child it will not be so much the meal the father provides, or the house in which it lives, as the father which it loves; it is his dear person that has become the object of true and hearty affection. I am sure it is so with you, if you know your Saviour; you love his mercies, you love his offices, you love his deeds, but O! you love his person best. Reflect, then, that the person of Christ is the covenant conveyed to you: "I will give thee to be a covenant for my people."

II. Now we come to the second: FOR WHAT PURPOSE DOES GOD PUT CHRIST IN THE COVENANT?

1. Well, in the first place, Christ is the covenant in order *to comfort every coming sinner*. "O!" says the sinner who is coming to God, "I can not lay hold on such a great covenant as that; I can not believe that heaven is provided for me; I can not conceive that that robe of righteousness and all these wondrous things can be intended for such a wretch as I am." Here comes in the thought that Christ is in the covenant. Sinner, canst thou lay hold on Christ? Canst thou say,

> "Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling?"

Well, if thou hast got that, it was put in on purpose for thee

t Lord fast by. God's covenant mercies all go together, and i thou hast laid hold on Christ, thou hast gained every blessi in the covenant. That is one reason why Christ was put there. Why, if Christ were not there, the poor sinner would say: "I dare not lay hold on that mercy. It is a god-like and a divine one, but I dare not grasp it; it is too good for me. I can not receive it; it staggers my faith." But he sees Christ with all his great atonement in the covenant; and Christ looks so lovingly at him, and opens his arms so wide, saying: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," that the sinner comes and throws his arms around Christ, and then Christ whispers: "Sinner, in laying hold of me, thou hast laid hold of all." "Why, Lord, I dare not think I could have the other mercies. I dare trust thee, but I dare not take the others." "Ah, sinner, but in that thou hast taken me thou hast taken all, for the mercies of the covenant are like links in the chain." This one link is an enticing one. The sinner lays hold of it; and God has purposely put it there to entice the sinner to come and receive the mercies of the covenant. For when he has once got hold of Christ—here is the comfort—he has every thing that the covenant can give.

2. Christ is put also *to confirm the doubting saint.* Sometimes he can not read his interest in the covenant. He can not see his portion among them that are sanctified. He is afraid that God is not his God, that the Spirit hath no dealings with his soul; but then,

> "Amid temptations, sharp and strong,
> His soul to *that dear refuge flies;*
> Hope is his anchor, firm and strong,
> When tempests blow and billows rise."

So he lays hold of Christ, and if it was not for that, even the believer dare not come at all. He could not lay hold on any other mercy than that with which Christ is connected. "Ah," saith he, "I know I am a sinner, and Christ came to save sinners." So he holds fast to Christ. "I can hold fast here," he says; "my black hands will not black Christ, my filthiness will not make him unclean." So the saint holds hard by Christ, as hard as if it were the death-clutch of a drowning

man. And what then? Why, he has got every mercy of the covenant in his hand. It is the wisdom of God that he has put Christ in, so that a poor sinner, who might be afraid to lay hold of another, knowing the gracious nature of Christ, is not afraid to lay hold of him, and therein he grasps the whole, but oft-times unconsciously to himself.

3. Again, it was necessary that Christ should be in the covenant, because *there are many things there that would be naught without him.* His great redemption is in the covenant, but we have no redemption except through *his* blood. It is true that his righteousness is in the covenant, but I can have no righteousness apart from that which Christ has wrought out, and which is imputed to me by God. It is very true that my eternal perfection is in the covenant, but the elect are only perfect in Christ. They are not perfect in themselves, nor will they ever be, until they have been washed, and sanctified, and perfected by the Holy Ghost. And even in heaven their perfection consists not so much in their sanctification as in their justification in Christ.

> "Their beauty this, their glorious dress,
> Jesus the Lord their righteousness."

In fact, if you take Christ out of the covenant, you have just done the same as if you should break the string of a necklace: all the jewels, or beads, or corals, drop off and separate from each other. Christ is the golden string whereon the mercies of the covenant are threaded, and when you lay hold of him, you have obtained the whole string of pearls. But if Christ be taken out, true there will be the pearls, but we can not wear them, we can not grasp them; they are separated, and poor faith can never know how to get hold of them. O! it is a mercy worth worlds, that Christ is in the covenant.

4. But mark once more, Christ is in the covenant *to be used.* God never gives his children a promise which he does not intend them to use. There are some promises in the Bible which I have never yet used; but I am well assured that there will come times of trial and trouble when I shall find that that poor despised promise, which I thought was never meant for me, will be the only one on which I can float. I

know that the time is coming when every believer shall know the worth of every promise in the covenant. God has not given him any part of an inheritance which he did not mean him to till. Christ is given us to use. Believer, use him! I tell thee again, as I told thee before, that thou dost not use thy Christ as thou oughtest to do. Why, man, when thou art in trouble, why dost thou not go and tell him? Has he not a sympathizing heart, and can he not comfort and relieve thee? No; thou art gadding about to all thy friends save thy best friend, and telling thy tale everywhere except into the bosom of thy Lord. O, use him, use him. Art thou black with yesterday's sins? Here is a fountain filled with blood; use it, saint, use it. Has thy guilt returned again? Well, his power has been proved again and again; come, use him! use him! Dost thou feel naked? Come hither, soul, put on the robe. Stand not staring at it; put it on. Strip, sir, strip thine own righteousness off, and thine own fears too. Put this on, and wear it, for it was meant to *wear*. Dost thou feel thyself sick? What, wilt thou not go and pull the night-bell of prayer, and wake up thy physician? I beseech thee go and stir him up betimes, and he will give the cordial that will revive thee. What! art thou sick, with such a physician next door to thee, a present help in time of trouble, and wilt thou not go to him? O, remember thou art poor, but then thou hast "a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth." What! wilt thou not go to him and ask him to give thee of his abundance, when he has given thee of this promise, that as long as he has any thing thou shalt go shares with him, for all he is and all he has is thine? O, believer, do use Christ, I beseech thee. There is nothing Christ dislikes more than for his people to make a show-thing of him and not to use him. He loves to be worked. He is a great laborer; he always was for his Father, and now he loves to be a great laborer for his brethren. The more burdens you put on his shoulders the better he will love you. Cast your burden on him. You will never know the sympathy of Christ's heart and the love of his soul so well as when you have heaved a very mountain of trouble from yourself to his shoulders, and have found that he does not stagger under the weight. Are your troubles like

huge mountains of snow upon your spirit? Bid them rumble like an avalanche upon the shoulders of the Almighty Christ He can bear them all away, and carry them into the depths of the sea. Do use thy Master; for this very purpose he was put into the covenant, that thou mightest use him whenever thou needest him.

III. Now, lastly, here is a PRECEPT, and what shall the precept be? Christ is ours; then *be ye Christ's*, beloved. You *are* Christ's, you know right well. You are his by your Father's donation when he gave you to the Son. You are his by his bloody purchase, when he counted down the price for your redemption. You are his by dedication, for you have dedicated yourselves to him. You are his by adoption, for you are brought to him and made one of his brethren, and joint-heirs with him. I beseech you, labor, dear brethren, to show the world that you are his in practice. When tempted to sin, reply, "I can not do this great wickedness. I can not, for I am one of Christ's." When wealth is before thee to be won by sin, touch it not; say that thou art Christ's, else thou wouldst take it; but now thou canst not. Tell Satan that you would not gain the world if you had to love Christ less. Are you exposed in the world to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you are one of Christ's. Are you in a field where much is to be done, and others are sitting down idly and lazily doing nothing? Go at your work, and when the sweat stands upon your brow and you are bidden to stay, say, "No, I can not stop; I am one of Christ's. He had a baptism to be baptized with, and so have I, and I am straitened until it be accomplished. I am one of Christ's. If I were not one of his, and purchased by blood, I might be like Issachar, crouching between two burdens; but I am one of Christ's." When the syren song of pleasure would tempt thee from the path of right, reply, "Hush your strains, O temptress; I am one of Christ's. Thy music can not affect me; I am not my own, I am bought with a price." When the cause of God needs thee, give thyself to it, for thou art Christ's. When the poor need thee, give thyself away, for thou art one of Christ's. When, at any time, there is aught to be done for his church and for his cross, do it, remembering that thou art

one of Christ's. I beseech thee, never belie thy profession. Go not where others could say of thee, "He can not be Christ's," but be thou ever one of those whose brogue is Christian, whose very idiom is Christ-like, whose conduct and conversation are so redolent of heaven, that all who see thee may know that thou art one of the Saviour's, and may recognize in thee his features and his lovely countenance.

And now, dearly beloved hearers, I must say one word to those of you to whom I have not preached, for there are some of you who have never laid hold of the covenant. I sometimes hear it whispered, and sometimes read it, that there are men who trust to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Let me solemnly assure you that there is *now* no such thing in heaven as uncovenanted mercy; there is no such thing beneath God's sky or above it, as uncovenanted grace toward men. All you can receive, and all you ever ought to hope for, must be through the covenant of free grace, and that alone.

Mayhap, poor convinced sinner, thou darest not take hold of the covenant to-day. Thou canst not say the covenant is thine. Thou art afraid it never can be thine; thou art such an unworthy wretch. Mark thee, canst thou lay hold on Christ? Darest thou do that? "O," sayest thou, "I am too unworthy." Nay, soul, darest thou touch the hem of his garment to-day? Darest thou come up to him just so much as to touch the very skirt that is trailing on the ground? "No," sayest thou, "I dare not." Why not, poor soul, why not? Canst thou not trust to Christ?

> "Are not his mercies rich and free?
> Then say, poor soul, why not for thee?"

"*I dare not come; I am so unworthy*," you say. Hear, then, my master bids you come, and will you be afraid after that? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Why dare you not come to Christ? O, you are afraid he will turn you away. Hark you, then, what he saith: "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Thou sayest, "*I know he would cast me out.*" Come, then, and see if thou canst prove him a liar. I know thou canst not, but come and try. He has said "whosoever." "*But I am the blackest.*" Nevertheless, he has said "whosoever;" come along, blackest of the black. "*O, but I am filthy.*" Come along, filthy one, come and try him, come and prove him, recollect he has said he will cast out none that come to him by faith. Come and try him. I do not ask thee to lay hold on the whole covenant, thou shalt do that by-and-by; but lay hold on Christ, and if thou wilt do that, then thou hast the covenant. "*O, I can not lay hold of him,*" saith one poor soul. Well, then, lie prostrate at his feet, and beg of him to lay hold of *thee.* Do groan one groan, and say, "Lord have mercy on me a sinner!" Do sigh one sigh, and say, "Lord, save or I perish." Do let thy heart say it, if thy lips can not. If grief long smothered burns like a flame within thy bones, at least let one spark out. Now pray one prayer, and verily I say unto thee, one sincere prayer shall most assuredly prove that he will save thee. One true groan where God has put it in the heart is an earnest of his love; one true wish after Christ, if it be followed by sincere and earnest seeking of him, shall be accepted of God, and thou shalt be saved. Come, soul, once more. Lay hold on Christ. "*O, but I dare not do it.*" Now I was about to say a foolish thing; I was going to say that I wish *I was* a sinner like thyself this moment, and I think I would run before, and lay hold on Christ, and then say to you, "Take hold too." But *I am* a sinner like thyself, and no better than thyself; I have no merits, no righteousness, no works; I shall be damned in hell unless Christ have mercy on me, and should have been there now if I had had my deserts. Here am I sinner once as black as thou art; and yet, O Christ, these arms embrace me. Sinner, come and take thy turn after me. Have not I embraced him? Am not I as vile as thou art? Come, and let my case assure thee. How did he treat me when I first laid hold of him? Why he said to me, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Come, sinner, come and try. If Christ did not drive me away, he will never spurn you. Come along, poor soul, come along:

"Venture on him ['tis no venture], venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

He can do thee all the good thou wantest: O, trust my Master, O, trust my Master; he is a precious Lord Jesus, he is a sweet Lord Jesus, he is a loving Saviour, he is a kind and condescending forgiver of sin. Come, ye black, come ye filthy, come ye poor, come ye dying, come ye lost—ye who have been taught to feel your need of Christ; come all of you—come now, for Jesus bids you come; come quickly. **Lord Jesus, draw them, draw them by thy Spirit! Amen.**

SERMON XXVI.

LOVE'S COMMENDATION.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—ROMANS, v. 8.

I SHALL have nothing new to tell you; it will be as old as the everlasting hills, and so simple that a child may understand it. Love's commendation. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God's commendation of himself and of his love is not in words, but in deeds. When the Almighty God would commend his love to poor man, it is not written, "God commendeth his love toward us in an eloquent oration;" it is not written that he commendeth his love by winning professions; but he commendeth his love toward us by an act, by a deed; a surprising deed, the unutterable grace of which eternity itself shall scarce discover. He "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Let us learn, then, upon the threshold of our text, that if we would commend ourselves, it must be by deeds, and not by words. Men may talk fairly, and think that thus they shall win esteem; they may order their words aright, and think that so they shall command respect; but let them remember, it is not the wordy oratory of the tongue, but the more powerful eloquence of the hand which wins the affection of "the world's great heart." If thou wouldst commend thyself to thy fellows, go and *do*—not go and *say;* if thou wouldst win honor from the excellent, talk not, but *act;* and if, before God thou wouldst show that thy faith is sincere, and thy love to him real, remember, it is no fawning words, uttered either in prayer or praise, but it is the pious deed, the holy act, which

is the justification of thy faith, and the proof that it is the faith of God's elect. Doing, not saying—acting, not talking—these are the things which commend a man.

"No big words of ready talkers,
No fine boastings will suffice;
Broken hearts and humble walkers,
These are dear in Jesus' eyes."

Let us imitate God, then, in this. If we would commend our religion to mankind, we can not do it by mere formalities, but by gracious acts of integrity, charity, and forgiveness, which are the proper discoveries of grace within. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ;" and so shall you honor him, and "adorn the doctrine" which you profess.

But now for this mighty deed whereby God commended his love. We think that it is twofold. We believe the apostle has given us a double commendation of love. The first is, "*God commendeth his love toward us, in that Christ died for us;*" the second commendation arises from our condition, "*In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*"

I. The first commendation of love, then, is this—"THAT CHRIST DIED FOR US;" and as the whole text is double, so this sentence also contains a twofold commendation. There is a commendation of love in the person who died—*Christ;* and then in the act which he performed—"Christ *died for us.*"

1. First, then, it is the highest commendation of love, *that it was* CHRIST *who died for us.* When sinful man erred from his Maker, it was necessary that God should punish his sin. He had sworn by himself, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and God—with reverence to his all-holy name be it spoken—could not swerve from what he had said. He had declared on Sinai that he would by no means clear the guilty; but inasmuch as he desired to pardon the offending, it was necessary that some one else should bear the sufferings which the guilty ought to have endured, that so by the vicarious substitution of another, God might be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." Now, the question might have arisen, "Who is he

that shall be the scape-goat for man's offense? Who is he that shall bear his transgressions and take away his sins?" If I might be allowed to picture in my imagination (and mark, it is nothing more than imagination), I could almost conceive a parliament in heaven. The angels are assembled; the question is proposed to them:—"Cherubim and seraphim, cohorts of the glorified, ye spirits that, like flames of fire, swift at my bidding fly; ye happy beings, whom I have created for my honor! here is a question which I condescend to offer for your consideration. Man has sinned; there is no way for his pardon but by some one suffering and paying blood for blood. Who shall it be?" I can conceive that there was silence throughout the august assembly. Gabriel spoke not: he would have stretchèd his wings, and flapped the ether in a moment, if the deed had been possible; but he felt that he could never bear the guilt of a world upon his shoulders, and, therefore still he sat. And there the mightiest of the mighty, those who could shake a world if God should will it, sat still, because they felt all-powerless to accomplish redemption. I do not conceive that one of them would have ventured to hope that *God himself* would assume flesh and die. I do not think it could have entered even into angelic thought to conceive that the mighty Maker of the skies should bow his awful head and sink into a grave. I can not imagine that the brightest and most seraphic of these glorified ones would for an instant have suffered such a thought to abide with him. And when the Son of God, upstarting from his throne, spoke to them and said, "Principalities and powers! I will become flesh, I will vail this Godhead of mine in robes of mortal clay, I will die!"—I think I see the angels for once astonished. They had seen worlds created; they had beheld the earth, like a spark from the incandescent mass of unformed matter, hammered from the anvil of Omnipotence, and smitten off into space; and yet they had not wondered. But on this occasion I conceive that they ceased not to marvel. "What! wilt thou die, O Word! Creator! Master! Infinite! Almighty! wilt thou become a man and die?" "Yes," saith the Saviour "I will." And are you not astonished, mortal men? Do you not wonder? What, will *you* not marvel? The hosts of

heaven still are wondering. Though it is many an age since they heard it, they have not yet ceased to admire; and do not you *begin* to marvel yet? Shall the theme which stirs the marvel of the seraph not move your hearts? That God himself should become man, and then should die for you! "God commendeth his love toward us, in that *Christ* should die." Had it been an archangel who had died for us, it would have been a theme for gratitude; had it been merely a good and holy man who had shed his blood, we might have kissed his feet and loved him forever; but seeing that he who groaned upon the tree was none other than the Almighty God, and that he who sweat in the garden while he was man, was still none other than one person of the all-glorious Trinity, it is indeed love's highest commendation that *Christ* should die. Roll that thought over in your mind; ponder it in your meditations; weigh it in your hearts. If you have right ideas of Godhead, if you would know what Christ is, if you can conceive him who is the everlasting God, and yet the man—if you can picture him, the pure, holy, perfect creature, and yet the everlasting Creator—if you can conceive of him as the man who was wounded, and yet as the God who was exalted forever—if you can picture him as the Maker of all worlds, as the Lord of providence, by whom all things exist and consist—if you can conceive of him now as robed in splendor, surrounded with the choral symphonies of myriads of angels, then, perhaps, you may guess how deep was that stride of condescension, when he stepped from heaven to earth, from earth to the grave, from the grave down, it is said, into the lowest "*sheol*," that he might make his condescension perfect and complete. "He hath commended his love" to you, my brethren, in that it was Christ, the Son of God, who died for us.

2. The second part of the first commendation lieth here, that Christ *died for us*. It was much love when Christ became man for us, when he stripped himself of the glories of his Godhead for awhile, to become an infant of a span long, slumbering in the manger of Bethlehem. It was no little condescension when he divested himself of all his glories, hung his mantle on the sky, gave up his diadem and the pleasures of his throne, and stooped to become flesh. It was, moreover, no

small love, when he lived a holy and a suffering life for us; it was love amazing, when God with feet of flesh did tread the earth, and teach his own creatures how to live, all the while bearing their scoffs and jests with cool, unangered endurance. It was no little favor of him that he should condescend to give us a perfect example by his spotless life; but the commendation of love lieth here—not that Christ *lived* for us, but that Christ *died* for us. Come, dear hearers, for a moment, weigh these words. "Christ *died* for us!" O! how we love those brave defenders of our nation who but lately died for us in a far-off land! Some of us showed our sympathy to their sons and daughters, their wives and children, by contributing to support them, when the fathers were laid low. We feel that the wounded soldier is a friend to us, and that we are his debtors forever. We may not love war; we may not, some of us, think it a Christian act to wield the sword; but, nevertheless, I am sure we love the men who sought to defend our country with their lives, and who died in our cause. We would drop a tear over the silent graves of Balaklava, if we were there now. And, beloved, if any of our friends should dare danger for our sakes, and more especially, if it should ever come to pass that any one of them should be called to die for us, should we not henceforth love them? Do any of us know what is contained in that great word "*die?*" Can we measure it? Can we tell its depths of suffering, or its heights of agony? "Died for us!" Some of you have seen death; you know how great and dread is its power; you have seen the strong man bowing down, his knees quivering; you have beheld the eyestrings break, and seen the eyeballs glazed in death; you have marked the torture and the agonies which appal men in their dying hours; and you have said, "Ah! it is a solemn and an awful thing to die." But, my hearers, "Christ *died for us.*" All that death could mean, Christ endured; he yielded up the ghost, he resigned his breath; he became a lifeless corpse, and his body was interred, even like the bodies of the rest that died. "Christ died for us." Consider the circumstances which attended his death. It was no common death he died; it was a death of ignominy, for he was put to death by a legal slaughter; it was a death of unutter

able pain, for he was crucified; and what more painful fate than to die nailed to a cross? It was a long, protracted death, for he hung for hours, with only his hands and his feet pierced—parts which are far away from the seat of life, but in which are situated the most tender nerves, full of sensibility. He suffered a death which for its circumstances still remains unparalled. It was no speedy blow which crushed the life out of the body, and ended it; but it was a lingering long, and doleful death, attended with no comforts and no sympathy, but surrounded with scorn and contempt. Picture him. They have hurled him on his back; they have driven nails through his hands and his feet; they have lifted him up. See! They have dashed the cross into its place. It is fixed. And now behold him! Mark his eyes all full of tears; behold his head, hanging on his breast. Ah! mark him, while Suffering, with her black wing, fans his cheek with flame. Behold him, while he seems all silently to say, "I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint: I am brought into the dust of death." Hear him when he groans, "I thirst." Above all, listen to him, while he cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" My words can not picture him; my thoughts fail to express it. No painter ever accomplished, nor shall any speaker be able to perform it. Yet I beseech you regard the royal sufferer. See him, with the eye of your faith, hanging on the bloody tree. Hear him cry, before he dies, "It is finished."

"See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

O! how I wish I could stir you! If I should tell you some silly story of a lovesick maid, you would weep; if I should turn novelist, and give you some sad account of a fabled hero who had died in pain—if it were a fiction, I should have your hearts; but this is a dread and solemn reality, and one with which you are intimately connected, for all this was done for as many of you as sincerely repent of your sins. "Is it nothing to you all, ye that pass by?" Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?

Bethink you that if you are saved, it *is* something to you, for the blood which trickles from his hands distills for *you*. That frame which writhes in torture writhes for *you;* those knees, so weak with pain, are weak for you; those eyes, dripping with showers of tears, do drop for you. Ah! think of him, then, ye who have faith in him; look to him, and as many of you as have not yet believed, I will pray for you, that you may now behold him as the expiation of your guilt, as the key which opens heaven to all believers.

II. Our second point was this: "God commendeth his love toward us," not only because Christ died for us, but that CHRIST DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS.

Let us for a moment consider what sort of sinners many of us have been, and then we shall see it was marvelous grace that Christ should die for men—not as penitents, but as sinners. Consider how many of us have been *continual* sinners. We have not sinned once, nor twice, but ten thousand times. Our life, however upright and moral it has been, is stained by a succession of sins. If we have not revolted against God in the outward acts which proclaim the profligate to be a great sinner, yet the thoughts of our heart, and the words of our lips, are swift witnesses against us that we have continually transgressed. And O! my brethren, who is there among us who will not likewise confess to sins of act? Who among us has not broken the Sabbath-day? Who among us has not taken God's name in vain? Who of us shall dare to say that we have loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength? Have we never, by any act whatsoever, showed that we have coveted our neighbor's goods? Verily I know we have; we have broken his commands, and it is well for us to join in that general confession —"We have done those things which we ought not to have done; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us." Now, the sweet thought is, that Christ died for us, while he knew that we should be continual transgressors. Men, brethren, and fathers, he did not die for you as those who have committed but one fault, but as those who were emphatically "sinners," of years' standing, some of you sinners with gray heads, sinners who

have persevered in a constant course of iniquity. As sinners we are redeemed, and by it we become saints. Does not this commend Christ's love to us, that he should die for sinners, who have dyed themselves with sin as with crimson and with scarlet, great and continual sinners.

Note again, he has died for us although our sins were *aggravated.* O! there are some of us here who are great sinners—not so much in the acts we have performed, as in the aggravation of our guilt. I reckon that when I sin, I sin worse than many of you, because I sin against better training than many of my hearers received in their youth. Many of you, when you sin, sin against faithful ministers and against the most earnest warnings. It has been your wont to sit under truthful pastors; you have often been told of your sins. Remember, sirs, when you sin you do not sin so cheap as others: when you sin against the convictions of your consciences, against the warnings of your friends, against the enlightenment of the times, and against the solemn monitions of your pastors, you sin more grossly than others do. The Hottentot sinneth not as the Briton doth. He who has been brought up in this land may be openly more righteous, but he may be inwardly more wicked, for he sins against more knowledge. But even for such, Christ died—for men who have sinned against the wooings of his love, against the strivings of their conscience, against the invitations of his Word, against the warnings of his providence—even for such, Christ died, and therein he commendeth his love toward us, that he died for sinners. My hearer, if thou hast so sinned, do not therefore despair, it may be he will yet make thee rejoice in his redemption.

Reflect again. When we were sinners, *we were sinners against the very person who died for us.* "'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful," that the very Christ against whom we have sinned died for us. If a man should be injured in the street, if a punishment should be demanded of the person who attacked him, it would be passing strange if the injured man should for love's sake bear the penalty, that the other might go free; but it was even so with Christ. He had been injured, yet he suffers for the very injury that others did to Him. He dies for his enemies—dies for the men that hate

and scorn him. There is an old tradition, that the very man who pierced Christ's side was converted; and I sometimes think that peradventure in heaven we shall meet with those very men who drove the nails into his hands and pierced his side. Love is a mighty thing; it can forgive great transgressors. I know my Master said, "Begin at Jerusalem," and I think he said that because there lived the men who had crucified him, and he wanted them to be saved. My hearer, hast thou ever blasphemed Christ? Hast thou ever mocked him, and scoffed at his people? Hast thou done all thou couldst to emulate the example of those who spat in his holy face? Dost thou repent of it? Dost thou feel thou needest a Saviour? Then I tell thee, in Christ's name, he is *thy* Saviour; yes, thy Saviour, though thou hast insulted him—*thy* Saviour, though thou hast trampled on him—*thy* Saviour, though thou hast spoken evil of his people, his day, his word, and his gospel.

Once more, let us remember, that many of us as sinners have been persons who for a long time have heard this good news, and yet *have despised it.* Perhaps there is nothing more wonderful in the depravity of man than that it is able to forget the love of Christ. If we were not so sinful as we are, there is not one of us here this morning who would not weep at the thought of the Saviour's love, and I believe there is not a solitary man, woman, or child here, who would not say, "I love thee, O my God! because thou hast done so much for me." It is the highest proof of our depravity that we do not at once love the Christ who died for us. There is a story told of the Covenanters—of one named Patrick Welwood—whose house was surrounded at a time when a minister had for security been hidden there. Claverhouse's dragoons were at the door, and the minister had fled. The master of the house was summoned, and it was demanded of him, "Where is the minister?" "He is gone; I can not tell whither, for I know not." But they were not satisfied with that; they tortured him, and since he could not tell them where he was (for in reality he did not know), they left him, after inflicting upon him the torture of the thumbscrew; and they took his sister, a young girl who was living in the house. I believe she did know where the minister was concealed, but on taking her

they asked her, and she said, "No, I can die myself, but I can never betray God's servant, and never will, as he may help me." They dragged her to the water's edge, and making her kneel down, they determined to put her to death. But the captain said, "Not yet; we will try to frighten her;" and sending a soldier to her, he knelt down, and applying a pistol to her ear, she was bidden to betray the minister or die. The click of the pistol was heard in her ear, but the pistol was not loaded. She slightly shivered, and the question was again asked of her. "Tell us now," said they, "where he is, or we will have your life." "Never, never," said she. A second time the endeavor was made; this time a couple of carabines were discharged, but into the air, in order to terrify her. At last they resolved upon really putting her to death, when Trail, the minister, who was hidden somewhere near, being aroused by the discharge of guns, and seeing the poor girl about to die for him, sprang forward, and cried, "Spare that maiden's blood, and take mine; this poor innocent girl, what hath she done?" The poor girl was dead even then with the fright; but the minister had come prepared to die himself, to save her life. O, my friends, I have sometimes thought that her heroic martyrdom was somewhat like the blessed Jesus. He comes to us, and says, "Poor sinner, wilt thou be my friend?" We answer, "No." "Ah! I will make thee so," saith he, "I will die for thee;" and he goes to die on the cross. O methinks I could spring forward and say, "Nay, Lord Jesus, nay, thou must not die for such a worm.' Surely such a sacrifice is a price too large to pay for poor sinful worms! And yet, my hearers, to return again to what I have uttered before, you will hear all this, and nine out of ten will retire from this place, and say, "It was an old, old story;" and while you can drop a tear for aught else, you will not weep one tear for Jesus, nor sigh one sigh for him, nor will you afford him even a faint emotion of love. Would it were different! Would to God he would change your hearts, that so you might be brought to love him.

Further, to illustrate my text, let me remark again, that inasmuch as Christ died for sinners, it is a special recommendation of his love for the following reasons: It is quite certain that

God did not consider *man's merit* when Christ died; in fact, no merit could have deserved the death of Jesus. Though we had been holy as Adam, we could never have deserved a sacrifice like that of Jesus for us. But inasmuch as it says, "He died for sinners," we are thereby taught that God considered our sin and not our righteousness. When Christ died, he died for men as black, as wicked, as abominable, not as good and excellent. Christ did not shed his blood for us as saints, but as sinners. He considered us in our loathsomeness, in our low estate and misery, not in that high estate to which grace afterward elevates us, but in all the decay into which we had fallen by our sin. There could have been no merit in us; and therefore, God commendeth his love by our ill-desert.

Again: it is quite certain, because Christ died for us sinners, that God had *no interest* to serve by sending his Son to die. How could sinners serve him? O, if God had pleased, he might have crushed this nest of rebels, and have made another world all holy. If God had chosen, the moment that man sinned he might have said unto the world, "Thou shalt be burned;" and like as a few years ago astronomers told us that they saw the light of a far-off world burning, myriads of miles away, this world might have been consumed with burning heat, and sin scorched out of its clay. But no. While God could have made another race of beings, and could have either annihilated us, or consigned us to eternal torment, he was pleased to vail himself in flesh, and die for us. Surely then it could not have been from any motive of self-interest. God had nothing to get by man's salvation. What are the attractions of human voices in paradise, what are the feeble symphonies which mortal lips can sing on earth, compared with the death of our Lord? He had angels enough. Do they not, day without night, circle his throne rejoicing? Are not their golden harps sufficient? Is not the orchestra of heaven large enough? Must our glorious Lord give up his blood to buy poor worms, that they may join their little notes with the great swell of a choral universe? Yes, he must; and, inasmuch as we are sinners, and could by no possibility repay him for his kindness, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But there is another commendation of love. Christ died for us *unasked*. Christ did not consider me as an awakened heir of heaven, but as a dead, corrupt, lost, and ruined heir of hell. If he had died for me as an awakened heir of heaven, then I could have prayed for him to die; for then I have power to pray, and will to pray; but Christ died for me when I had no power nor will to lift my voice in prayer to him. It was entirely unasked. Where did you ever hear that man was first in mercy? Did man ask God to redeem? Nay, rather, it is almost the other way; it is as if God did entreat man to be redeemed. Man never asked that he might be pardoned, but God pardons him, and then turns round and cries, "Return unto me, backsliding children of men, and I will have mercy upon you." Sinners! if you should go down on your knees, and were for months to cry for mercy, it would be great mercy if Mercy should look upon you; but without asking, when we are hardened and rebellious, when we will not turn to Christ, he still comes to die for us: tell it in heaven, tell it in the lower world! God's amazing work surpasses thought, for Love itself died for hatred—Holiness did crucify itself to save poor sinful men, and unasked for and unsought, like a fountain in the desert, sparkling spontaneously with its native waters, Jesus Christ came to die for man, who would not seek his grace. "God commendeth his love toward us."

And now, my dear hearers, I want to close up, if the Spirit of God will help me, by endeavoring to commend God's love to you, as much as ever I can, and inviting as many of you as feel your need of a Saviour, to lay hold of him and embrace him now as your all-sufficient sacrifice. Sinner! I can commend Christ to thee for this reason: *I know that thou needest him.* Thou mayest be ignorant of it thyself, but thou dost need him. Thou hast a leprosy within thy heart—thou needest a physician; thou sayest "I am rich," but sinner, thou art not—thou art naked, and poor, and miserable. Thou sayest, "I shall stand before God accepted at last;" but, sinner, without Christ thou wilt not, for whosoever believeth not on Christ "hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Hear that, my dear hearers; "the wrath of God abideth on him." O, that wrath of God! Sinner, thou needest Christ, even

though thou dost not think so. O, that the Lord would impress this upon thee!

Again, a day is coming when *thou wilt feel thy need* of Christ, if thou dost not now. Within a few short years, perhaps months, or days, thou wilt lie upon the last bed that shall ever bear thy weight; soon thou shalt be stayed up by soft pillows; thy frame will be weak, and thy soul full of sorrow. Thou mayest *live* without Christ now, but it will be hard work to *die* without him. Thou mayest do without this bridge here; but when thou gettest to the river thou wilt think thyself a fool to have laughed at the only bridge which can carry thee safely over. Thou mayest despise Christ now, but what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan? Canst thou face death, and not be afraid? Nay, man, thou art affrighted now if the cholera is in the city; or if some little sickness is about thee thou shakest for fear; what wilt thou do when thou art in the jaws of death, when his bony hand is squeezing thee, and when his dart is in thy vitals? What wilt thou do then without a Saviour? Ah! thou wilt want him then. And what wilt thou do when thou hast passed that black stream, when thou findest thyself in the realm of spirits—in that day of judgment, when the thunders shall be loosed, and the wings of the lightning shall be unbound—when tempests shall herald, with trumpet voices, the arrival of the great Assize. What wilt thou do when thou shalt stand before *his* bar, before whom, in astonishment, the stars shall flee, the mountains quake, and the sea be licked up with tongues of forked flame. What wilt thou do when, from his throne, he shall exclaim, "Come hither, sinner," and thou shalt stand there alone, to be judged for every deed done in the body. Thou wilt turn thine head, and say, "O! for an advocate!" And he shall look on thee and say, "I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will now laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." Ah! what wilt thou do then, sinner, when the judgment-seat is set? O! there will be weeping—there will be weeping at the judgment-seat of Christ. And what wilt thou do in that day when he shall say, "Depart, ye cursed;" and when the black angel, with a countenance more fierce than lightning, and with a

voice louder than ten thousand thunders, shall cry, "Depart!" and smite thee down where lie forever those accursed spirits, bound in fetters of iron, who, long ago, were cast into perdition. Say not I tell thee terrible things; if it be terrible to speak of, how terrible it must be to bear! If you believe not what I say, I shall not wonder if you laugh at me; but as the most of you believe this, I claim your most solemn attention to this subject.

Sirs! do you believe there is a hell, *and that you are going there?* And yet do you still march heedless on? Do you believe that beyond you, when the stream of life is ended, there is a black gulf of misery? and do you still sail downward to it, quaffing still your glass of happiness, still merry as the live-long day? O stay, poor sinner, stay! Stay! It may be the last moment thou wilt ever have the opportunity to stay in. Therefore stay now, I beseech thee. And if thou knowest thyself to be lost and ruined, if the Holy Spirit has humbled thee, and made thee feel thy sin, let me tell thee how thou shalt be saved. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not," saith the Scripture, "shall be *damned*." Do you not like that message? Ought I to have said another word instead of that? If you wish it I shall not; what God says I will say; far be it from me to alter the messages from the Most High; I will, if he help me, declare his truth without altering. He saith, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." What is it to believe? To tell you as simply as possible: to believe is to give up trusting in yourself, and to trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour. The negro said, you know, "Massa, dis here is how I believe—when I see a promise I do not stand on de promise; but I say, dat promise firm and strong; I fall flat on it; if de promise will not bear me, den it is de promise fault; but I fall flat on it." Now, that is faith. Christ says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Faith is to say, "Well, then, sink or swim, that is my only hope; lost or saved, that is my one refuge. I am resolved, for this is my last defense,

"'If I perish there and die,
At his cross I still will lie.'"

"*What!*" says one, "*no good works?*" Good works will come afterward, but they do not go with it. You must come to Christ, not with your good works, but with your sins, and coming with your sins he will take them away, and give you good works afterward. After you believe, there will be good works as the effect of your faith; but if you think faith will be the effect of good works, you are mistaken. It is "believe and live." Cowper calls them, the soul-quickening words, "*believe and live.*" This is the sum and substance of the gospel.

Now, do any of you say this is not the gospel? I shall ask you one day what it is. Is not this the doctrine Whitefield preached? Pray what else did Luther thunder, when he shook the Vatican? What else was proclaimed by Augustine and Chrysostom, but this one doctrine of salvation in Christ by faith alone? And what did Paul write? Turn you to his epistles. And what did our Saviour himself say, when he left these words on record—"Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And what did he command his disciples to teach them? To teach them this. The very words I have now repeated to you were his last commission. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

But again, you say, "How can I believe that Christ died for me?" Why, thus. He says he died for sinners: canst thou say thou art a sinner? I do not mean with that fine complimentary phrase which many of you use, when you say, "*Yes, I am a sinner;*" and if I sit down to ask you, "Did you break that commandment?" "*O, no,*" you will say; "Did you commit that offense?" "*O no;*" you never did any thing wrong. And yet you are sinners. Now that is the sort of sinners I do not think I shall preach to. The sort of sinners I would call to repentance are those whom Christ invited—those who mean what they say when they confess that they are sinners—those who know that they have been guilty, vile, and lost. If thou knowest thy sinnership, so truly Christ

died for thee. Remember that striking saying of Luther. Luther says, "Satan once came to me and said, 'Martin Luther, thou art lost, for thou art a sinner.' Said I to him, 'Satan, I thank thee for saying I am a sinner, for, inasmuch as thou sayest I am a sinner, I answer thee thus—Christ died for sinners; and if Martin Luther is a sinner, Christ died for him.'" Now, canst thou lay hold on that, my hearer? It is not on my authority, but on God's authority. Go away and rejoice; for if thou be the chief of sinners thou shalt be saved, if thou believest.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved by Christ I am,
From sin's tremendous curse and blame."

Sing that, poor soul, and thou hast begun to sing the song of Paradise. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, apply these simple statements of truth to the salvation of your souls.

SERMON XXVII.

TURN OR BURN.

"If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready."—PSALM vii. 12.

"IF the sinner turn not, God will whet his sword." So, then, God has a sword, and he will punish man on account of his iniquity. This evil generation hath labored to take away from God the sword of his justice; they have endeavored to prove to themselves that God will "clear the guilty," and will by no means "punish iniquity, transgression, and sin." Two hundred years ago the predominant strain of the pulpit was one of terror; it was like Mount Sinai, it thundered forth the dreadful wrath of God, and from the lips of a Baxter or a Bunyan, you heard most terrible sermons, full to the brim with warnings of judgment to come. Perhaps some of the Puritan fathers may have gone too far, and have given too great a prominence to the terrors of the Lord in their ministry; but the age in which we live has sought to forget those terrors altogether, and if we dare to tell men that God will punish them for their sins, it is charged upon us that we want to bully them into religion, and if we faithfully and honestly tell our hearers that sin must bring after it certain destruction, it is said that we are attempting to frighten them into goodness. Now we care not what men mockingly impute to us; we feel it our duty, when men sin, to tell them that they shall be punished; and so long as the world will not give up its sin, we feel we must not cease our warnings. But the cry of the age is, that God is merciful, that God is love. Ay, who said he was not? But remember, it is equally true, God is just, severely and inflexibly just! He were not God, if he were not

just; he could not be merciful if he were not just, for punishment of the wicked is demanded by the highest mercy to the rest of mankind. Rest assured, however, that he is just, and that the words I am about to read you from God's word are true: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" "God is angry with the wicked every day;" "if he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Forsooth, because this age is wicked, it is to have no hell; and because it is hypocritical, it would have but feigned punishment. This doctrine is so prevalent as to make even the ministers of the gospel flinch from their duty in declaring the day of wrath. How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come. They preach of God's love and mercy, as they ought to do, and as God has commanded them; but of what avail is it to preach mercy unless they preach also the doom of the wicked? And how shall we hope to effect the purpose of preaching unless we warn men that if they "turn not, he will whet his sword?" I fear that in too many places the doctrine of future punishment is rejected, and laughed at as a fancy and a chimera; but the day will come when it shall be known to be a reality. Ahab scoffed at Micaiah, when he said he should never come alive; the men of Noah's generation laughed at the foolish old man (as they thought him), who bid them take heed, for the world should be drowned; but when they were climbing to the tree-tops, and the floods were following them, did they then say that the prophecy was untrue? and when the arrow was sticking in the heart of Ahab, and he said, "Take me from the battle, for I must die;" did he then think that Micaiah spoke an untruth? And so it is now. You tell us we speak lies, when we warn you of judgment to come; but in that day when your mischief shall fall on yourselves, and when destruction shall overwhelm you, will you say we were liars then? Will you then turn round and scoff, and say he spake not the truth? Rather, my hearers, the highest meed of honor will then be given to him who was the most faithful in warning men concerning the wrath of God. I have often trembled at

the thought, that, here I am standing before you, and constantly engaged in the work of the ministry, and what if, when I die, I should be found unfaithful to your souls, how doleful will be our meeting in the world of spirits? It would be a dreadful thing if you were able to say to me in the world to come, "Sir, you flattered us; you did not tell us of the solemnities of eternity; you did not rightly dwell upon the awful wrath of God; you spoke to us feebly and faintly; you were somewhat afraid of us; you knew we could not bear to hear of eternal torment, and therefore you kept it back and never mentioned it!" Why, methinks you would look me in the face and curse me through eternity, if that should be my conduct. But, by God's help, it never shall be. Come fair or foul, when I die, I shall, God helping me, be able to say "I am clear of the blood of all men." So far as I know God's truth, I will endeavor to speak it; and though on my head opprobrium and scandal be poured to a tenfold greater extent than ever, I'll hail it, and welcome it, if I may but be faithful to this unstable generation, faithful to God, and faithful to my own conscience. Let me, then, endeavor, and, by God's help, I will do it as solemnly and as tenderly as I can, to address such of you as have not yet repented, most affectionately reminding you of your future doom, if you should die impenitent. "If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

In the first place, *what is the turning here meant?* In the second place, let us dwell on the *necessity there is for men's turning, otherwise God will punish them;* and then, thirdly, let me remind you of the *means whereby men can be turned from the error of their ways, and the weakness and frailty of their nature amended by the power of divine grace.*

I. In the first place, my hearers, let me endeavor to explain to you the NATURE OF THE TURNING HERE MEANT. It says, "If he *turn* not, he will whet his sword."

To commence, then. The turning here meant *is actual*, not fictitious—not that which stops with promises and vows, but that which deals with the real acts of life. Possibly one of you will say, this morning, "Lo, I turn to God; from this time forth I will not sin, but I will endeavor to walk in holiness; my vices shall be abandoned, my crimes shall be thrown to

the winds, and I will turn unto God with full purpose of heart;" but, mayhap, to-morrow you will have forgotten this: you will weep a tear or two under the preaching of God's word, but by to-morrow every tear shall have been dried, and you will utterly forget that you ever came to the house of God at all. How many of us are like men who see their faces in a glass, and straightway go away and forget what manner of men they are! Ah! my hearer, it is not thy promise of repentance that can save thee; it is not thy vow, it is not thy solemn declaration, it is not the tear that is dried more easily than the dew-drop by the sun; it is not the transient emotion of the heart, which constitutes a real turning to God. There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin, and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in every day life. Do you say you are sorry, and repent, and yet go on from day to day, just as you always went? Will you now bow your heads, and say, "Lord, I repent," and in a little while commit the same deeds again? If you do, your repentance is worse than nothing, and shall but make your destruction yet more sure; for he that voweth to his Maker, and doth not pay, hath committed another sin, in that he hath attempted to deceive the Almighty, and lie against the God that made him. Repentance, to be true, to be evangelical, must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.

In the next place, repentance to be sure *must be entire.* How many will say, "Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other; but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold"? O sirs, in God's name let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbor one of these accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham. If thou dost indulge in but one lust, and dost give up every other, that one lust, like one leak in a ship, will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices; fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life; it is all or none which God demands. "Repent," says he; and when he bids you repent, he means, repent for all thy sins, otherwise he never can accept thy repentance as being real and genuine. The true penitent hates sin in the

race, not in the individual—in the mass, not in the particular He says, "Gild thee as thou wilt, O sin, I abhor thee! ay, cover thyself with pleasure, make thyself gaudy, like the snake with its azure scales—I hate thee still, for I know thy venom, and I flee from thee, even when thou comest to me in the most specious garb." All sin must be given up, or else you shall never have Christ; all transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of heaven must be barred against you. Let us remember, then, that for repentance to be sincere, it must be entire repentance.

Again: when God says, "If he turn not, he will whet his sword," he means *immediate* repentance. You say, when we are nearing the last extremity of mortal life, and when we are entering the borders of the thick darkness of futurity, then we will change our ways. But, my dear hearers, do not delude yourselves. It is few who have ever changed after a long life of sin. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" If so, let him that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well. Put no faith in the repentance which you promise yourselves on your death-beds. There are ten thousand arguments against one, that if you repent not in health, you never will repent in sickness. Too many have promised themselves a quiet season before they leave the world, when they could turn their face to the wall and confess their sins; but how few have found that time of repose! Do not men drop down dead in the streets—ay, even in the house of God? Do they not expire at their business? And when death is gradual, it affords but an ill season for repentance. Many a saint has said on his death-bed, "O! if I had now to seek my God; if I had now to cry to him for mercy, what would become of me? These pangs are enough, without the pangs of repentance. It is enough to have the body tortured, without having the soul wrung with remorse." Sinners! God saith: "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me and proved me." When God the Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, they will never talk of delays. You may never have another day to repent in. Therefore, saith the voice of wisdom, "repent now." The Jewish rabbis said: "Let every man repent one

lay before he dies; and since he may die to-morrow, let him take heed to turn from his evil ways to-day." Even so we say, immediate repentance is that which God demands, for he hath never promised thee that thou shalt have any hour to repent in, except the one that thou hast now.

Furthermore; the repentance here described as absolutely necessary is *hearty* repentance. It is not a mock tear; it is not hanging out the ensigns of grief, while you are keeping merriment in your hearts; it is not having an illumination within, and shutting up all the windows by a pretended repentance. It is the putting out of the candles in the heart; it is sorrow of soul, which is true repentance. A man may renounce every outward sin, and yet not really repent. True repentance, is a turning of the heart, as well as of the life; it is the giving up of the whole soul to God, to be his forever and ever; it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart, as well as the crimes of the life. Ah! dear hearers, let none of us fancy that we have repented when we have only a false and fictitious repentance; let none of us take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature; let us not dream that we have savingly turned to God, when, perhaps, we have only turned to ourselves. And let us not think it enough to have turned from one vice to another, or from vice to virtue; let us remember, it must be a turning of the whole soul, so that the old man is made anew in Christ Jesus; otherwise we have not answered the requirements of the text—we have not turned unto God.

And lastly upon this point, this repentance must be *perpetual*. It is not my turning to God during to-day that will be a proof that I am a true convert; it is forsaking of my sin throughout the entire of my life, until I sleep in the grave. You need not fancy that to be upright for a week will be a proof that you are saved; it is a perpetual abhorrence of evil. The change which God works is neither a transitory nor a superficial change; not a cutting off the top of the weed, but an eradication of it; not the sweeping away of the dust of one day, but the taking away of that which is the cause of the defilement. In old times, when rich and generous monarchs came into their cities they made the fountains run with milk

and wine; but the fountain was not therefore a fountain of milk and wine always; to-morrow it ran with water as before. So you may to-day go home and pretend to pray; you may to-day be serious, to-morrow you may be honest, and the next day you may pretend to be devout; but if you return, as Scripture has it, "like the dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," your repentance shall but sink you deeper into hell, instead of being a proof of divine grace in your hearts.

It is very hard to distinguish between legal repentance and evangelical repentance; however, there are certain marks whereby they may be distinguished, and at the risk of tiring you, we will just notice one or two of them; and may God grant that you may find them in your own souls! Legal repentance is a fear of damning; evangelical repentance is a fear of sinning. Legal repentance makes us fear the wrath of God; evangelical repentance makes us fear the cause of that wrath, even sin. When a man repents with that grace of repentance which God the Spirit works in him, he repents not of the punishment which is to follow the deed, but of the deed itself; and he feels that if there were no pit digged for the wicked; if there were no ever-gnawing worm, and no fire unquenchable, he would still hate sin. It is such repentance as this which every one of you must have, or else you will be lost. It must be a hatred of sin. Do not suppose that because when you come to die you will be afraid of eternal torment, therefore that will be repentance. Every thief is afraid of the prison; but he will steal to-morrow if you set him free. Most men who have committed murder tremble at the sight of the gallows-tree, but they would do the deed again could they live. It is not the hatred of the punishment that is repentance; it is the hatred of the deed itself. Do you feel that you have such a repentance as that? If not, these thundering words must be preached to you again—"If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

But one more hint here. When a man is possessed of true and evangelical repentance, I mean the gospel repentance which saves the soul—he not only hates sin for its own sake, but loathes it so extremely and utterly that he feels that no

repentance of his own can avail to wash it out; and he acknowledges that it is only by an act of sovereign grace that his sins can be washed away. Now, if any of you suppose that you repent of your sins and yet imagine that by a course of holy living you can blot them out; if you suppose that by walking uprightly in future you can obliterate your past transgressions, you have not yet truly repented; for true repentance makes a man feel that

> "Could his zeal no respite know,
> Could his tears forever flow,
> All for sin could not atone;
> Christ must save, and Christ alone."

And if it is so killed in thee that thou hatest it as a corrupt and abominable thing, and wouldst bury it out of thy sight, but that thou feelest that it will never be entombed, unless Christ shall dig the grave, then thou last repented of sin. We must humbly confess that we deserve God's wrath, and that we can not avert it by any deeds of our own; and we must put our trust solely and entirely in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. If you have not so repented, again we exclaim in the words of David, "If you turn not, he will whet his sword."

II. And now the second point: it is a yet more terrible one to dwell upon, and if I consulted my own feelings I should not mention it; but we must not consider our feelings in the work of the ministry, any more than we should if we were physicians of men's bodies. We must sometimes use the knife, when we feel that mortification would ensue without it. We must frequently make sharp gashes into men's consciences, in the hope that the Holy Spirit will bring them to life. We assert, then, that there is a NECESSITY that God should whet his sword and punish men, if they will not turn. Earnest Baxter used to say: "Sinner! turn or burn; it is thine only alternative; TURN, or BURN!" And it is so. We think we can show you why men must turn, or else they burn.

1. First, we can not suppose the God of the Bible could suffer sin to be unpunished. Some may suppose it; they may dream their intellects into a state of intoxication, so as to suppose a God apart from justice; but no man whose reason is

sound, and whose mind is in a healthy condition, can imagine a God without justice. You can not suppose a king without it to be a good king; you can not dream of a good government that should exist without justice, much less of God, the Judge and King of all the earth, without justice in his bosom. To suppose him all love, and no justice, were to undeify him, and make him no longer God; he were not capable of ruling this world if he had not justice in his heart. There is in man a natural perception of the fact, that if there be a God, he must be just; and I can scarcely imagine that you can believe in a God, without believing also in the punishment of sin. It were difficult to suppose him elevated high above his creatures, beholding their disobedience, and yet looking with the same serenity upon the good and upon the evil; you can not suppose him awarding the same meed of praise to the wicked and to the righteous. The idea of God, supposes justice; and it is but to say justice when you say God.

2. But to imagine that there shall be no punishment for sin, and that man can be saved without repentance, is to fly in the face of all the Scriptures. What! are the records of divine history nothing? And if they be any thing, must not God have mightily changed, if he doth not now punish sin? What! did he once blast Eden, and drive our parents out of that happy garden, on account of a little theft, as man would style it? Did he drown a world with water, and inundate creation with the floods that he had buried in the bowels of the earth? And will he not punish sin? Let the burning hail which fell on Sodom tell you that God is just; let the open mouth of the earth which swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, warn you that he will not spare the guilty; let the mighty works of God which he did in the Red Sea, the wonders which he wrought on Pharaoh, and the miraculous destruction which he brought on Sennacherib, tell you that God is just. And it were perhaps out of place for me in the same argument to mention the judgments of God even in our age; but have there never been such? This world is not the dungeon where God punishes sin, but still there are a few instances in which we can not but believe that he actually did avenge it. I am no believer that every accident is a judgment; I am far from

believing that the destruction of men and women in a theater is a punishment upon them for their sin, since the same thing has occurred in divine service, to our perpetual sorrow. I believe judgment is reserved for the next world; I could not account for providence, if I believed that God punishes here. "Those men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay." It has injured religion for men to make up every providence, and say, for instance, that because a boat was upset on the Sabbath-day it was a judgment on the persons that were in it. We assuredly believe that it was sinful to spend the day in pleasure, but we deny that it was a punishment from God. God usually reserves his punishment for a future state; but yet, we say, there have been a few instances in which we can not but believe that men and women have been by Providence in this life punished for their guilt. I remember one which I scarcely dare relate to you. I saw the wretched creature myself. He had dared to imprecate on his head the most awful curses that man could utter. In his rage and fury he said he wished his head were twisted on one side, that his eyes were put out, and that his jaws were made fast: but a moment afterward the lash of his whip—with which he had been cruelly treating his horse—entered his eye, brought on first inflammation, and then lock-jaw, and when I saw him he was just in the very position in which he had asked to be placed, for his head was twisted round, his eyesight was gone, and he could not speak except through his closed teeth. You will remember a similar instance happening at Devizes, where a woman declared that she had paid her part of the price of a sack of meal, when she had it in her hand, and immediately dropped down dead on the spot. Some of these may have been singular coincidences; but I am not so credulous as to suppose that they were brought about by chance, I think the will of the Lord was in it. I believe they were some faint intimations that God was just, and that although the full shower of his wrath does not fall on men in this life, he does pour a drop or two on them, to let us see how he will one day chasten the world for its iniquity.

3. But why need I go far to bring arguments to bear on you, my hearers? Your own consciences tell you that God must punish sin. You may laugh at me, and say that you have no such *belief*. I did not say you had, but I say that your conscience tells you so, and conscience has more power over men than what they think to be their belief. As John Bunyan said, Mr. Conscience had a very loud voice, and though Mr. Understanding shut himself up in a dark room where he could not see, yet he used to thunder out so mightily in the streets, that Mr. Understanding used to shake in his house through what Mr. Conscience said. And it is often so. You say in your understanding, "I can not believe God will punish sin;" but you know he will. You would not like to confess your secret fears, because that were to give up what you have so often most bravely asserted. But because you assert it with such boast and bombast, I imagine you do not believe it, for if you did, you would not need to look so big while saying it. I know this, that when you are sick none sooner than you cry out for mercy. I know that when you are dying you will believe in a hell. Conscience makes cowards of us all, and makes us believe, even when we say we do not, that God must punish sin.

Let me tell you a story; I have told it before, but it is a striking one, and sets out in a true light how easily men will be brought in times of danger to believe in a God, and a God of justice too, though they have denied him before. In the backwoods of Canada there resided a good minister, who one evening went out to meditate, as Isaac did, in the fields. He soon found himself on the borders of a forest, which he entered, and walked along a track which had been trodden before him; musing, musing still, until at last the shadows of twilight gathered around him, and he began to think how he should spend a night in the forest. He trembled at the idea of remaining there, with the poor shelter of a tree into which he would be compelled to climb. On a sudden he saw a light in the distance, among the trees, and imagining that it might be from the window of some cottage where he would find a hospitable retreat, he hastened to it, and to his surprise saw a space cleared, and trees laid down to make a platform, and

upon it a speaker addressing a multitude. He thought to himself, "I have stumbled on a company of people, who in this dark forest have assembled to worship God, and some minister is preaching to them, at this late hour of the evening, concerning the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" but to his surprise and horror, when he came nearer, he found a young man declaiming against God, daring the Almighty to do his worst upon him, speaking terrible things in wrath against the justice of the Most High, and venturing most bold and awful assertions concerning his own disbelief in a future state. It was altogether a singular scene; it was lighted up by pine-knots, which cast a glare here and there, while the thick darkness in other places still reigned. The people were intent on listening to the orator, and when he sat down thunders of applause were given to him; each one seeming to emulate the other in his praise. Thought the minister, "I must not let this pass; I must rise and speak; the honor of my God and his cause demands it." But he feared to speak, for he knew not what to say, having come there suddenly; but he would have ventured, had not something else occurred. A man of middle age, hale and strong, rose, and leaning on his staff, he said: "My friends, I have a word to speak to you to-night. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator; I shall not criticise his style; I shall say nothing concerning what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered; but I shall simply relate to you a fact, and after I have done that you shall draw your own conclusions. Yesterday I walked by the side of yonder river; I saw on its floods a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable; it was going fast toward the rapids; he could not use the oars, and I saw that he was not capable of bringing the boat to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony; by-and-by he gave up the attempt to save his life, kneeled down and cried with desperate earnestness, 'O God! save my soul! If my body can not be saved, save my soul.' I heard him confess that he had been a blasphemer; I heard him vow that if his life were spared he would never be such again; I heard him implore the mercy of heaven for Jesus Christ's sake, and earnestly plead that he might be washed in

his blood. These arms saved that young man from the flood; I plunged in, brought the boat to shore, and saved his life. That same young man has just now addressed you, and cursed his Maker. What say you to this, sirs?" The speaker sat down. You may guess what a shudder ran through the young man himself, and how the audience in one moment changed their notes, and saw that after all, while it was a fine thing to brag and bravado against Almighty God on dry land, and when danger was distant, it was not quite so grand to think ill of him when near the verge of the grave. We believe there is enough conscience in every man to convince him that God must punish him for his sin; therefore we think that our text will wake an echo in every heart.—"If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

I am tired of this terrible work of endeavoring to show you that God must punish sin; let me just utter a few of the declarations of his holy word, and then let me tell you how repentance is to be *obtained.* O, sirs, you may think that the fire of hell is indeed a fiction, and that the flames of the nether most pit are but popish dreams; but if you are believers in the Bible you must believe that it can not be so. Did not our Master say: "Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched?" You say it is metaphorical fire. But what meant he by this: "He is able to cast both *body* and soul into hell?" Is it not written, that there is reserved for the devil and his angels fearful torment? and do you not know that our Master said: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment;" "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" "Yes," you say, "but it is not philosophical to believe that there is a hell; it does not consort with reason to believe there is." However, I should like to act as if there were, even if there is no such place; for as the poor and pious man once said: "Sir, I like to have two strings to my bow. If there should be no hell I shall be as well off as you will; but if there should, it will go hard with you." But why need I say "if?" You know there is. No man has been born and educated in this land, without having his conscience so far enlightened as to know that to be a truth. All I need to do is to press upon your anxious consideration

this thought: Do you feel that you are a fit subject for heaven now? Do you feel that God has changed your heart and renewed your nature? If not, I beseech you lay hold of this thought, that unless you be renewed all that can be dreadful in the torments of the future world must inevitably be yours. Dear hearer, apply it to thyself, not to thy fellow-men, but to thine own conscience, and may God Almighty make use of it to bring thee to repentance!

III. Now, briefly, what are the MEANS of repentance? Most seriously I say, I do not believe any man can repent with evangelical repentance, of himself. You ask me then to what purpose is the sermon I have endeavored to preach, proving the necessity of repentance? Allow me to make the sermon of some purpose, under God, by its conclusion. Sinner! thou art so desperately set on sin, that I have no hope thou wilt ever turn from it of thyself. But, listen! He who died on Calvary is exalted on high "to give repentance and remission of sin." Dost thou this morning feel that thou art a sinner? If so, ask of Christ to give thee repentance, for he can work repentance in thine heart by his Spirit, though thou canst not work it there thyself. Is thy heart like iron? He can put it into the furnace of his love and make it melt. Is thy soul like the nether millstone? His grace is able to dissolve it, like the ice is melted before the sun. He can make thee repent, though thou canst not make thyself repent. If thou feelest thy need of repentance, I will not now say to thee "repent," for I believe there are certain acts that must precede a sense of repentance. I should advise you to go to your houses, and if you feel that you have sinned, and yet can not sufficiently repent of your transgression, bow your knees before God and confess your sins; tell him you can not repent as you would; tell him your heart is hard; tell him it is cold as ice. You *can* do that if God has made you feel your need of a Saviour. Then if it should be laid to your heart to endeavor to seek after repentance, I will tell you the best way to find it. Spend an hour first in endeavoring to remember thy sins; and when conviction has gotten a firm hold on thee, then spend another hour—where? At Calvary, my hearer. Sit down and read that chapter which contains

the history and mystery of the God that loved and died; sit down and think thou seest that glorious Man, with blood dropping from his hands, and his feet gushing rivers of gore; and if that does not make thee repent, with the help of God's Spirit, then I know of nothing that can. An old divine says: "If you feel you do not love God, love him till you feel you do; if you think you can not believe, believe him till you feel you believe." Many a man says he can not repent while he is repenting. Keep on with that repentance, till you feel you have repented. Only acknowledge thy transgressions; confess thy guiltiness; own that he were just if he should destroy thee; and say this, solemnly,

> "My faith doth lay its hand
> On that dear head of thine,
> While, like a penitent, I stand,
> And there confess my sin."

O! what would I give if one of my hearers should be blessed by God to go home and repent! If I had worlds to buy one of your souls, I would readily give them, if I might but bring one of you to Christ. I shall never forget the hour when I hope God's mercy first looked on me. It was in a place very different from this, among a despised people, in an insignificant little chapel, of a peculiar sect. I went there bowed down with guilt, laden with transgression. The minister walked up the pulpit stairs, opened his Bible, and read that precious text: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside me there is none else;" and, as I thought, fixing his eyes on me, before he began to preach to others, he said: "Young man! look! look! look! You are one of the ends of the earth; you feel you are; you know your need of a Saviour; you are trembling because you think he will never save you. He says this morning 'Look!'" O how my soul was shaken within me then! What! thought I, does that man know me, and all about me? He seemed as if he did. And it made me "look!" Well, I thought, lost or saved, I will try; sink or swim, I will run the risk of it; and in that moment I hope by his grace I looked upon Jesus, and though desponding, downcast, and ready to despair, and

feeling that I could rather die than live as I had lived, at that very moment it seemed as if a young heaven had had its birth within my conscience. I went home, no more cast down; those about me, noticing the change, asked me why I was so glad, and I told them I had believed in Jesus, and that it was written, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." O! if one such should be here this morning. Where art thou, thou chief of sinners, thou vilest of the vile? My dear hearer, thou hast never been in the house of God perhaps these last twenty years; but here thou art covered with thy sins, the blackest and vilest of all! Hear God's word. "Come, now, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, and though they be red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow." And all this for Jesus' sake; all this for his blood's sake! "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved;" for his word and mandate is: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned."

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